Shepherds

5-3

DECEMBER 1950

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SHEPHERDS

November, 1950
Vol. 5—No. 3

Geo. H. Jones, *Editor*
Gordon Pratt Baker, *Editorial Assistant*
D. E. Jackson, *Business Manager*

TIDINGS, 1908 Grand Avenue
Nashville 4, Tennessee

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Cover: The Wise Men Start Out—Gustave Doré

For Christ and His Church at Christmas

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		Amount
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by Gordon Pratt Baker

◈

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Nameless Saints

nnamed the shepherds long ago
ho heard the angels sing
nd watched a Star more brilliant grow
bove a cradled King.

nseen except of seraphim
hey made their eager way
o stand in awe and look at him
nd worship where he lay.

nknown they left the humble place
here God ordained Christ's birth;
ut by their simple act of faith
nspired the whole wide earth.

—Gordon Pratt Baker

Bethlehem Caravan

Over the wind-blown sands,
under a sapphire sky,
the Magi came from Eastern lands
with frankincense, gold and myrrh in their hands,
at the call of an Infant's cry.

By caravan trail they came,
in the silver hush of the night,
with their eyes fixed on a starry flame
that sparkled and shone for One whose name
is Saviour, and Light of Light.

Camels and men are gone,
the earth might cease to be,
but the gifts that they brought to that tiny Son
will be remembered by everyone
throughout eternity.

—Author unknown

Putting Christ into Christmas

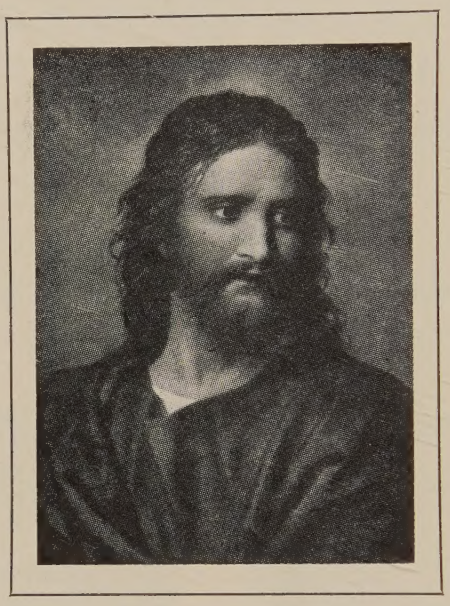
Russell Q. Chilcote

Which is easier for us to picture—Christmas without Santa Claus? or Christmas without Christ? The myth? or the fact? What is the proportion between the times we make mention of Santa Claus to our children and the number of times we point out some important fact concerning Christ's relationship to Christmas? When we set about to purchase gifts for loved ones and friends, do we also remember to honor Christ with gifts of time, talents, and money? Which is easier for us to do—to put Santa Claus or Christ into Christmas?

This is no plea that we should do away with Santa Claus. A few psychologists and some unimaginative realists may think we ought to do so. Were this to be done, however, think of the millions of broken-hearted children there would be. Think of the parents themselves who would be deprived of this romantic, anonymous way of bestowing gifts upon their children and seeing the expression on their faces on Christmas morning. Who has heard of one child grown to adulthood who has regretted a childhood belief in Santa Claus? Who has ever heard an adult complain against his parents for making Santa Claus a reality for him as a small child? In brief, the Santa Claus tradition is precious to us—as children and as adults.

The point is not to cast Santa Claus aside in our celebration of Christmas but to make Christ significant also. If we have good reasons for putting Santa Claus into Christmas, we have yet better reasons for putting Christ there. Had Christ never been born, no day would have been set aside as Christmas. The New Testament would never have been written. The Christian Church would not have come into existence. Our individual, family, and corporate lives would be most miserable, without hope. Christ by his coming among us has put and continues dynamically to put meaning into our human existence. Because of his significance to all of life, none ought to resent, none ought to deny, putting Christ into Christmas; he belongs there.

If Santa Claus, being a myth, has so important a place in Christmas, does not Christ, a person whom God sent among us, have an even more vital place in the celebration of Christmas? Would that Christ were as universally accepted as Santa Claus, as universally loved! Many recognize him for the actual, historical



personage that he was, but all about us we find too many of those who have no personal knowledge of his power and his majesty, and fail to recognize him as Teacher come from God, as Redeemer and Master of everyday life. Christians do not ask that Santa Claus be dismissed from Christmas, even if that were possible, but only that Christ be admitted more significantly.

The task of putting Christ into Christmas is a colossal one. In an age so fraught with fears for the individual, disruption of family life through separation and divorce, tension among nations—a whole globe in confusion—Christ needs to be born in the hearts of the inhabitants of this earth. Because we live in a pleasure-loving, materialistic age, an age of so much superficiality spawned by egotism and sophistication, and so little manifestation of the spirit of Christlike humility, the task of putting Christ into Christmas is all the more difficult.

We are all aware of the atheistic materialism of communism. How devastatingly detrimental it is to putting Christ into Christmas in those countrie where that philosophy of life and pla of economy is the order of the day Even in our own country the sinews materialism have in recent decad assumed alarming proportions an strength. Christians in our land a saddened by the fact that half of ou citizens have no affiliation with an Christian church. Another reflection that most of our churches would b embarrassed if some Sunday all th members should turn out for worshi The church buildings are not larg enough to seat all the members at onc Yet Sunday after Sunday in the gre majority of them an appalling numbe of vacant pews bespeak to the discern ing that the Christian faith is not a vit part of the life of so-called Christian even on Sunday, to say less of everyda to say nothing of Christmas day.

Despite these depressing facts, how ever, Christmas still remains a univers celebration and Christ still belongs in i Christians can, and with hope of su cess, do much in a practical way increase the degree in which they pu Christ into Christmas. Let us consid some areas where we can with increa ing determination do this—for instanc in the individual heart, in the home, an among the heedless in the world large.

It is to be noted at the outset th these so-called areas overlap and th they have one thing in common—huma beings. By reaching the individual f Christ, his home is, in turn, influence A home composed of Christians mak its impact in the Christian church wi which those family members are affi ated. The church composed of individu members acts as a unit of power f Christ to influence community life. T Christian individual, the home, and th church all act as leavening influenc upon the whole lump of the unconcern and heedless to whom Christ and h Church and the Kingdom are meanin less.

In the first place, what can we d to put Christ into Christmas on the i dividual level? In this it is well begin with oneself. Just as you prepa in advance for the coming of San Claus, likewise begin before Christm day to put Christ into your Christma Read and ponder the Old Testame

phecies concerning the promise of Messiah. Read for new significance meaning the stories relating to ist's birth as found in the gospels ording to Matthew and Luke. Offer yers of thanksgiving to God for "unspeakable gift." Read or sing ughtfully the words of the Christ- tered Christmas carols. Listen to io programs or phonograph records great Christmas music and to other grams pointing up the eternal values ting to Christ's coming. Do not allow rself in the hustle and bustle of Christmas season to push aside its ritual aspect. Seek after calmness d the peace of God which passes all derstanding.

During the Advent season attend gularly the religious services in your urch—the preaching services, choral grams, white Christmas services. termine to put Christ into your ristmas by making a special gift ering to further his work in your al church and in your community and ewhere. Invite others, whom you ow are not in the habit of attending urch or are unaffiliated with any urch, to join you in attendance at rship. These are some of the ways in ich you can help to put Christ more aningfully into your Christmas and, rchance, into the Christmas of others o.

Secondly, what can we do to put rist into Christmas in the home? veral of the details recommended in preceding paragraph may readily be acticed on the family level as well. those might be added a word regard- Christmas greetings. Since Christ- s ought to be Christ-centered, it ems logical that the greeting cards individual or family sends to loved ones or friends ought to be religious, both in the art work and in the wording of the verses. Many of us do not put Christ in Christmas in the greetings we send. This year notice the greetings you select. Have they content appropriately honoring the birth of Christ?

Family devotions and singing of carols are helpful in instilling proper meaning of Christmas in the minds of children in the home. Teach them the Christian significance of gift giving at Christmas time. Teach them the spiritual symbolism related to such things as the evergreen tree, the Christmas candle, the star.

As for gifts to be given to loved ones and friends, those are most appropriate which cast no improper shadow upon the teachings and Spirit of Christ. It is abhorrent to the Christian, for example, that some would think to present a gift of intoxicating wines and liquors to others as a Christmas gift. Again, toy guns and leaden soldiers as minor gifts and presents for one's own or for other children may satisfy the fancy of the children, but these as gifts are scarcely in keeping with the Spirit of Jesus, the Prince of Peace. We do not put Christ into Christmas in the minds of our children by presenting things of this kind to them on Christmas.

The sensitive person, the person who is devout, thoughtful, and sincere in his faith and witness to Christ, will not neglect to put Christ into Christmas in his own home. Cooperation on the part of all members of the family will make for a merry Christmas, with Christ having his rightful place in the festivities of the day.

Finally, what can we do to put Christ into Christmas among those who are heedless and unconcerned? At this point it is of primary importance that all Christians serve as examples. If we as Christians fail to put Christ into Christmas to the best of our knowledge and ability, we nullify any hope of success in leading and persuading others to do so.

It seems reasonable, furthermore, that a church in a given community, or a cooperative effort on the part of all the churches in a community, could plan a strategy for launching an all-out attack against pagan practices and the materialistic view of Christmas. A well-planned, psychologically correct, spiritually sound, prayerfully undertaken campaign to suggest, invite, and persuade people to put Christ into Christmas would meet with some success in our communities. The local newspapers, the radio, a letter sent into every home outlining the values to be derived from putting Christ into Christmas, placards bearing the words, "Put Christ into Christmas," and placed in every possible store window and elsewhere—these are a few suggestions that might net meritorious results.

Brotherhood needs to prevail if the unity of the Spirit is to unite the hearts of people in Christlike fellowship. Only thus can we put Christ into Christmas everywhere.

In conclusion, the responsibility to put Christ into Christmas lies with those who are already Christians. The Christmas of the Christian must be distinguishable from the Christmas of the non-Christian. Faith in Christ must be our religion; our practice of his teachings, our blueprint of action; his Spirit, our spirit. Nothing less will do at Christmastide—or at any other time during the year.

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The Christmas Evangel

I

The message of Christmas is that Christ is central—central to the home, to the nation, to the world.

When God saw fit to send His Messiah to earth, He chose not the palace of a king, nor the grand estate of a Roman patriarch, nor even the shining halls of the Temple, but rather the simple home of a Palestinian carpenter as the center of eternal hope. The child Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man amidst the curled shavings of a workshop where He shared Joseph's honest toil. When it became time for Him to inaugurate His ministry He wrought His first miracle in a home at the wedding feast in Cana of Galilee. The last moments leading up to the swift climax of His life He spent in an Upper Room in the home of an unknown friend.

Even at the cross the home was present, for Mary knelt tearfully at His feet while the last petition to burst from His lips was the evening prayer which every loyal Jewish mother taught her child.

Nor did His preaching escape the impact of His home! Who among His hearers could misunderstand a spiritual influence that is like the yeast with which a housewife leavens a loaf? Or who could escape the imperative to reclaim lost souls once Jesus had likened the task to a woman's frantic search for a lost coin?

Advent forever made the home focal to salvation. There is no redemption apart from it. What the home is the world will be. Here men must learn the transforming truths by which to change the pattern of the years. Here they must attain ideals by which to shape the design of their souls.

What kind of home do *we* have this Christmas? Is it marked by the inspiration of purposeful labor? Does it know the countless miracles which love alone can work? Is it vigorously alive to such spiritual power as only the presence of God can give? Does it witness a deepening of our faith with the accrual of our years?

Jesus learned the Scriptures in His home. How often do we read them as a family? Jesus learned to pray at His mother's knee. Do we gather regularly in the circle of prayer? Jesus thrilled to God's purpose for His peop as Joseph and Mary talked of Israel's adventure in fait What constitutes the burden of our conversations within t walls of our home? Are we earnestly trying, as a family, know God's will and to go God's way?

One of the first corporate acts of the Holy Family was seek the blessing of the church. Are we sharing with o loved ones its holy benefits? How often do we attend divi worship as a family, sharing our spiritual food with t same eager anticipation with which we share our daily foo How often do we make the church's tasks our mutu responsibilities as a family?

The first Christmas was a family experience and Chris anity is a family faith. Born in a home, it flourished in t homes of the faithful. The worship of shepherds and Ma in the manger only foreshadowed the worship of oth stalwart souls who, like Philemon, established a chur in their house. The central unit of the nation is the hon Christmas proclaims the inescapable fact that central the home is Christ.

II

The home to which Christ came was located in a nati which was central to the world. God chose for the nativ that country which links together Asia, Africa, and Euro Even a casual glance at the map reveals that Palestine a radial point. From her rugged land, using roads H conquerors had built, the great evangel could travel in o direction to the darkness of primitive European forests a in the other direction to the dying civilizations of the Orie It was not by accident but by sacred design that humb Hebrew shepherds and proud Persian priests met at Jes feet!

Long since, Israel had prepared for His coming. Throu an evolutionary process partially obscured by antiquity a climaxing in the Exodus when Moses introduced his peo to the Midian Yahweh the Hebrews had developed monotheistic faith uniting God and Israel in a mutua binding covenant. From the chosen people this covena demanded spiritual service of high quality, expressing t divine will in commonplace experience; while on God's p it guaranteed the exercise of a historical control which wo so shape the course of human events as to establish earthly theocracy.

That Israel's ethic and God's kingdom were thus int dependent was the increasingly assured conviction of t prophets. Again and again these spokesmen for the Lo declared that behind life's apparent vagaries lay an invin ble purpose which God would reveal in His own good ti And He would disclose it through the active agency of H people under the leadership of a divinely-appoint Messiah.

How strongly Israel's traditions supported this ba conception! Time and again, as she reviewed experien like that of her great emancipator at the Red Sea or thou upon the deliverance of Jerusalem from the blasphem armies of Sennacherib, she found proof of her calling a people set apart to prepare the way of the Lord in t wilderness. Had not the Second Isaiah, defying the appar

futation of the Exile, fervently promised that

. . . the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising . . . and they shall show forth the praises of the Lord . . . they shall come up with acceptance on mine altar, and I will glorify the house of my glory. (Isaiah 60:3-7)

ıd had not the book of Jonah been written to prove the ɔrld's need of the Hebrew God?

Here was a mandate which had gradually expanded rael's earlier nationalism to the proportions of a magnifi-nt obsession for the redemption of all the earth. Whatever e others might say, and however well they might say it, re was something which Israel knew, not as a garish and hemeral episode, but as a natural and reliable experience. ɔw often she had applied the test of her time to her ıth and always her truth had prevailed. And in prevailing had grown larger and stronger, like a youth who pits his wrestling skills against adversary after adversary until there is none left to challenge him.

Thus Jesus came to a nation which was spiritually eager for divine action. Never were a people more fully prepared to hear a tranforming gospel. History pointed them toward hope and hope pointed them toward God. Advent, then, was God's answer to the hungry hearts of the nation. But it was a nation which was pivotal in the experience of the world.

Again the hearts of men are hungry for a transforming gospel. And again they need to hear that gospel in a nation which has power to influence the world.

During this season, then, we must think "long, long thoughts" as by our silence or our sacrifice we influence the peoples of the earth. For as our homes shape the character of our nation, so our nation—like the Israel to which Christ came—shall determine the destiny of all the world.

Tidings Tract of the Month

Christ in Christmas

by

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An attractive and effective leaflet which will inspire every home in the observance of Christmas

Regular rate--$2.00 per 100
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TIDINGS

1908 Grand Avenue Nashville 4, Tennessee

Christmas and the New Birth

Dawson C. Bryan

SOMETIMES we create our opportunities. On other occasions someone else gives them to us.

Two brothers, Leonard and Edgar Rhodes, had grown up in poverty on the farm. When they went to the city their folks said, "You are going to a big city. We can't give you anything more than $5.00, but we are giving you a precious Book. Read it and live by its teachings. Find a church and attend it." These two brothers went to Boston and became members of Tremont Temple.

One day a deacon, George W. Chipman, invited this raw country youth, Leonard, home to dinner. He became much interested in him.

Some time later in conversation Leonard mentioned to Chipman, "I'd like to go into business."

"That's fine," Chipman replied. "What's stopping you?"

"I haven't any money."

"Oh, I'll fix that up," Chipman assured him.

On the basis of the finances proffered, the Rhodes brothers started in the produce business and made a great success of it. They became unusually devoted to the Church in both gifts and service. Their success had been dependent not only upon their own efforts, but primarily upon the financial assistance given by a friend. Chipman made it possible for them to succeed.

The Methodist Church is now being provided with a glorious opportunity by United Protestantism. All Protestant Communions are being offered the same "redeeming chance" of putting Christ at the center during the Christmas season. The primary meaning of the birth of Christ is the birth of new life to those who become His followers. The significance of the birthday of our Lord Jesus is the new birth in the lives of people.

So much of our Christmas season is given to secular pursuits. It seems increasingly so. Even the Church program is often diverted from the major joy of helping other people to experience a new life in Christ. Now an opportunity to make Christmas more Christian is being presented to us.

United Week of Visitation

During 1950, the Federal Council of Churches has led the Protestant Churches of the nation in a United Evangelistic Advance. Almost all denominations have participated, either cooperatively or simultaneously. This United Evangelistic Advance comes to a climax at this Christmas season. The grand idea is that every church in the land will offer to the unchurched people of its community an opportunity to come to a new life in Christ at this season of His birth. It is hoped that every church will seek out and receive new members on Christmas Sunday. It holds promise of being a time of the Advent of Christ into many, many lives.

And so the Federal Council of Churches is calling every Church in America to a United Week Of Visitation Evangelism, December 3 to 7. Our Methodism is being offered a great opportunity. It fits in so closely with our own Evangelistic Advance for Christ and His Church. Here is an opportunity to place Christ at the center, to really spiritualize Christmas, to make it a time of seeking out and winning people to our Lord and Master.

Every Methodist pastor knows how to put on a Week of Visitation Evangelism—or the materials and program are available to help him. He needs simply to write to TIDINGS, 1908 Grand Ave., and secure the pamphlet, "How Conduct a Successful Week of Visit tion Evangelism." The price is 10 cen per copy; seven for 50¢.

Set the date now on your churc calendar—December 3 to 7—t United Visitation Evangelism Wee Secure prospects. Line up Visitor Meet for the four nights of instructio Monday through Thursday, Decemb 3 to 7. Provide inspiration and go wi your laymen visiting into the homes the unchurched. And then will come every minister and participating la man the joy of receiving a group new members on Christmas Sunday.

Watch Night and Covenant Sunday

Since the beginning of the Ne Year coincides with the beginning the new half-century it is particular appropriate at this time that Christi people should pledge anew their loya ty to Christ and His Church. Towa this end it is strongly urged that a our churches hold Watch Night servic on December 31, providing opportuni for worshipers to covenant themselv to God. The General Board of Eva gelism, through its Tidings Depa ment, stands ready to assist in t holy project.

The Christian God is a Covena God. From the days of Abraham the present, He would have His peop enter into a covenant with Him.

Therefore a simple covenant ca has been prepared, dealing with thin paramount in the Church. We call up pastors and churches to present the cards to their people in appropria worship programs and to mail th to their constituents that they mig glorify God by leading men and wom into higher planes of consecration a Christian living. This covenant ca may be obtained from Tidings at $1. per 100.

A newly-prepared order of worsh planned especially for the spirit inauguration of the new half-centu is also available in quantity from T ings at $2.00 per 100.

SIMULTANEOUS Visitation Evangelism

By Jesse M. Bader, Executive Secretary, Department of Evangelism
Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America

THE Committee on the United Evangelistic Advance is suggesting that e week of December 3-7 be observed every Protestant church in America a week of Simultaneous Visitation angelism. Here is a part of the Adnce in which every minister and every urch may participate.

Imagine what it will mean to the ral and spiritual life of our nation d to thousands of the unreached and unchurched, if all the Protestant urches of all the communions go into s week enthusiastically.

Participating in the United Evangetic Advance are 38 communions, with mberships totaling 35,000,000. The cretaries of Evangelism of all the 38 mmunions are members of the Adnce Committee and are behind this sitation plan and program wholeartedly. They are the ones who de ed on the date and plan.

Three Ways to Cooperate

There are three ways a local pastor d church may cooperate in this nationde Simultaneous Visitation Evangen plan:

1. If the local Council of Churches Ministerial Association is sponsoring mmunity-wide program of Visitation angelism, then each local church rged to cooperate in such a plan.
2. If there is no cooperative effort in community, led by a Council of urches or a Ministerial Association, n a local congregation may join nds in and through its denominational ngelistic plans and program.
3. If there is no cooperative plan the community, led by a Council of urches, Ministerial Association or the nomination, then any minister and ngregation desiring to participate in h a week should do so, even though may be the only church in the comnity to join in the plan. By such a ticipation, it will be having fellowp with hundreds of other congregans of other communities across the ion.

There are many congregations which, ing recent years, have been selecting, training and using their lay men and women in personal work. They have secured commendable results. Many have been won to Christ by them and these are now in the active membership of the church. Where a trained group is available already, the pastor will find it easier to enter this special week and participate in so laudable an endeavor with hundreds of other pastors. Those congregations which have never used the plan of Visitation Evangelism may well inaugurate it now.

Laymen Go Out

During the past four years, the Protestant churches of America have selected, trained and used over 1,500,000 lay men and women in face-to-face and heart-to-heart evangelism. They have gone out to their neighbors and friends to give their witness in behalf of Christ and the Church. During the past four years, we have all been in the midst of a revival of lay evangelism. It has come so quietly and effectively that many have been quite unconscious that anything unusual was happening. But something has happened. These lay men and women, under the guidance and training of their pastors, have gone about their work with no fanfare, no blowing of trumpets or beating of drums.

Jesus said, with reference to the white harvest fields, "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth labourers into His harvest." Many have prayed and the Lord has heard and answered. Not in this century, at least, have there ever been so many lay men and women out in the harvest field as now. The songs of the reapers have been heard and they have been inspiring music.

Between now and December 3, each pastor and congregation will want to do four things:

1. Prepare the church by prayer, sermons, and literature for a real spiritual experience. One can't grow seeds in frozen ground. Persons can't be won to Christ by a church which is cold and indifferent.
2. Select and train a group of workers. Have them reserve the week for Visitation Evangelism. They should be requested to cancel all other engagements and give this glorious work of soul-winning the right of way.
3. Prepare a prospect or responsibility list. This is most important. Many pastors and churches fail at this place in their evangelism because they do not pay sufficient attention to this list of potential members. Card them—cultivate them—teach them and win them.
4. Order the literature as early as possible. Every communion has prepared adequate materials for use by the pastor and his church for Visitation Evangelism.

Just Before Christmas

The National Committee was wise in the selection of the date for this Simultaneous Visitation Evangelism program. It comes just before Christmas, when the thoughts of everyone are centered on the Christ of Christmas. The very atmosphere and the meaning of Christmas will be found helpful in winning others to Him who is the center of our thoughts at this happy season of the year. People are thinking of gifts to others. What greater gift can one make at Christmas than the gift of himself to Christ?

May I urge with all the force possible that every pastor and church find a way to have a Christmas ingathering of new members on Sunday, December 24?

The churches of America are coming to the climax days of the United Evangelistic Advance. It began on October 1, 1949, and closes on December 31, this year. By participation in the Simultaneous Visitation plan on the part of *every pastor* and *every church,* the Advance can be ended in a glorious way. So, let us all think in terms of possibilities and not in terms of limitations. What is the best we can do for Christ and His Church, in the reaching, teaching and winning of others to Him?

The Upper Room in Tourist Courts

I have just returned from a 10,000 mile trip that covered more than half the states in the United States.

Overnight we stayed in motels, for the most part, though we did stay at a few hotels. In all the hotels and a few of the motels, I found the Gideon Bible. In one motel, I found THE UPPER ROOM. The woman in charge said that her Bible class (Presbyterian) bought THE UPPER ROOM for all motels and tourist homes in their town (Kodoka, South Dakota). She said that it was really surprising how many of them were carried away from the motels by the travelers. Of course, that was exactly what was wanted.

I think the idea is one to be followed up. With all due respect and all reverence for the Holy Word, I feel that the small volume has the advantage in these situations. There are several reasons. One is that with its page for every day, it is more inviting to the non-believer; another reason is that since it is so inexpensive a tourist does not feel strange about taking it away with him. Few people would take a Bible from a hotel room, but many might take a small paper pamphlet. Only God knows how much good could be done, and how many people could be led to a better understanding of "The Way."

Is there any organized effort afoi anywhere to see to it that motels a over the country are reached? Ho could it be done? I know that there a hundreds of them throughout the cou try. It is a growing and flourishing bus ness. Of course, by the word "mote I am including tourist homes, cab courts, and all such places that cater the traveling public.

I am not a woman of much mean but I'd be willing to help in any wa I could—either in money or time.

I am really anxious that somethin be done about it. I feel that there is a opportunity. The fact that I stayed some 35 or 40 motels and found TH UPPER ROOM in only one is proof th not enough is being done.

May I hear from you about this ma ter?

Sincerely and prayerfull
Myra S. Ewing
Maplewood, New Jersey

Bringing Christ to the Prisoner

Grateful letters from chaplains of prisons throughout the country, as well as from other interested workers, attest to the great religious benefits wrought by the copies of THE UPPER ROOM *made available to the prisoners through the Chaplains' Fund.*

You will please find enclosed a check for $10.00—a contribution from a friend toward the Chaplain's Fund which makes possible THE UPPER ROOM for prisoners.

The July and August issue arrived, and the men are quite elated over it. Thank you so much for this most helpful contribution to the need of these men at the Allegheny County Workhouse, where I am Protestant Chaplain.

G. A. Parkins
First Methodist Church
Corner Lincoln Ave. and Butler St.
Millvale, Pittsburgh 9, Pa.

For some time now you have been sending to the above address 20 copies of THE UPPER ROOM and it is the most appreciated booklet of its kind available. I have a list of men to whom each issue is given and many of them, if their copy is not on hand at the beginning of the period, ask for it.

The English Pocket Edition is the handiest size for an institution such as ours. It fits into an envelope and I am able to have it distributed with the regular mail. Some of the younger members of my congregation are embarrassed by the criticism of the irreligious element when receiving a religious publication. When it is delivered in an envelope with the regular mail, they are saved from smart remarks.

Again let me thank you for your past generosity, and I trust that THE UPPER ROOM will continue to arrive.

Yours sincerely,
Rev. G. W. McNeill, Chaplain
Manitoba Penitentiary
Stony Mountain, Manitoba, Canada

I think the enclosed quotation from the letter of a boy in solitary confinement will tell you better than I can not only how great the need is, but how gratefully THE UPPER ROOM is received. The last 200 you sent were ii deed a blessing.

Mrs. Mittie E. Watte
1910 West Ashby
San Antonio 1, Texas

The enclosed quotation from a priso er's letter:

"I found a copy of THE UPPER Roo in my cell. It is hard to tell you ju how much peace of mind and comfo I received from that little booklet. was God's work that left that booklet the cell I was to occupy. He knew th life for me was at its darkest mome at that time and that I needed som thing to bring my faith in God to li The more I read the more at peace became. I still have that copy of Th UPPER ROOM and I wouldn't part wi it any more than I would part with m Bible."

I gave the books, THE UPPER Roo to a young man in jail here for murde and he became converted while a pri oner. Now he has gone to the Oh Penitentiary for life, and I would li to know if I could have a subscripti for THE UPPER ROOM sent to him the

Mrs. Goldie McInty
Cleveland, Ohio

Spiritual Power Is Infectious

all the years of my ministry, I have never been as conscious of the work power of the Holy Spirit in my rge as I am today.

On coming to West Woodlawn, Birgham, following our local Annual nference and seeing the vast field of ortunity, we recognized that if anyng were to be accomplished comnsurate with the opportunity present, re must be strength other than that ch the pastor and people had within nselves.

At the very first meeting of the cial Board we laid down the chalge that all other things were to be ondary to the enlisting of souls in rist's Kingdom. We even set a goal t seemed far beyond probability, yet beyond possibility—100 by profesn of faith and 150 by certificate. is goal in respect to the memberp at that time (300 active, 265 inive) seemed very high but the Official ard pledged to pray for it, work for yea, even *expect* to attain it! That rit of expectancy is the most imtant of all our feelings about the wth of Christ's Kingdom. We have stantly and consistently urged and eated, "We expect somebody to n our Church every Sunday!"

Visited Every Sunday

The pastor has visited every Sunday ool class (22) each Sunday. This was the nature of a "pop" call. Many es we have made brief statements in classes but always we have adnished our people to "pray for the rship services and expect something at to happen for Christ's Kingdom." We also have met with a group of nior boys and girls every Saturday rning in the parsonage. In the meet; we used Bishop Harrell's "A Methst Child's Membership Manual," ng over and over the Catechism. Out these meetings have come nine mems by profession of faith.

There has not been a Sunday when we have not received from one to 14 new members.

We have not followed any particular organized plan except the one prescribed by our Lord Christ, "Go. . . . Compel them to come in."

We made our Community Survey (which was not as complete as we wanted) February 5. Then in the week of March 5, for three nights, we had nine full teams each night that visited 58 homes. Among these visitors there were four men who had been received into the Church only a few weeks before —two of these by baptism. We received only nine new members during this visitation, three by profession and six by transfer of membership. Yet the greatest thing happened to those men who visited. Only six of the visitors had ever visited before.

One man came to me after the evening worship of March 4, when there were 85 at the altar for complete consecration, and said, "Brother Frank, you have asked me to visit this week but I just can't do it." I asked him why. He told me, "I've just got to talk to you." I said, "All right, let's go back into this side room right now." We went. Then he told me, "I just can't talk to somebody else when I'm not right myself." I said, "Well, you can get right right now." We prayed. Then I promised him that I would go with him on his first night's visiting. He came for the visitation. I went with him and his buddy. No success. On the second night he went with his buddy. On the first call, a drunken man met them at the door. On the second call, a lady refused them entrance in no uncertain terms. After this he told his buddy, "Brother Frank said we ought to pray before we go into each house—let's do it." They prayed right on the street. "Then," he said, "when we went up the steps to the next place I said 'Lord, tell me what to say,' then we knocked on the door. The television set was on and the man was eating supper but the lady asked us in. Before I knew it, when we'd been there just a short time, the lady had signed the commitment card. You know, preacher, it **works**!"

Army Man Received

One of the visitors was a man we had baptized and received into the Church on January 15. He had been in the regular army 22 years and was about ready to retire. When I received him I also baptized and received his nine-year-old daughter into the Church and received the transfer of his wife. He said, "I've been all over the world and have taken part in almost every kind of religious service. All the time I've wanted the feeling of God's presence. Now I know I have it. I've never experienced before the joy I feel now in visiting homes to tell about Christ's love."

We hadn't planned special services for the Easter Season but on every hand, after the wonderful service on the evening of March 5, we were urged to have the Church open for worship every night beginning March 19. There was no set order of service planned but the pastor and people were there to do what God's Spirit led us to do. The main purpose was for deep, vital, self-examination. There was preaching, but this was not the emphasis. We were meeting in God's House to pray and sing and testify to His glory, and of our need of Him. The pastor had prepared a little pamphlet, "My Spiritual Inventory," which was gone over item by item. This was not for exhibitionism but for soul-searching meditation. The pamphlet was a series of questions about our relationship to God and man. No one was asked to answer them publicly but everyone was expected to meditate on them in God's House and to ask His Divine guidance in giving answers pleasing to Him.

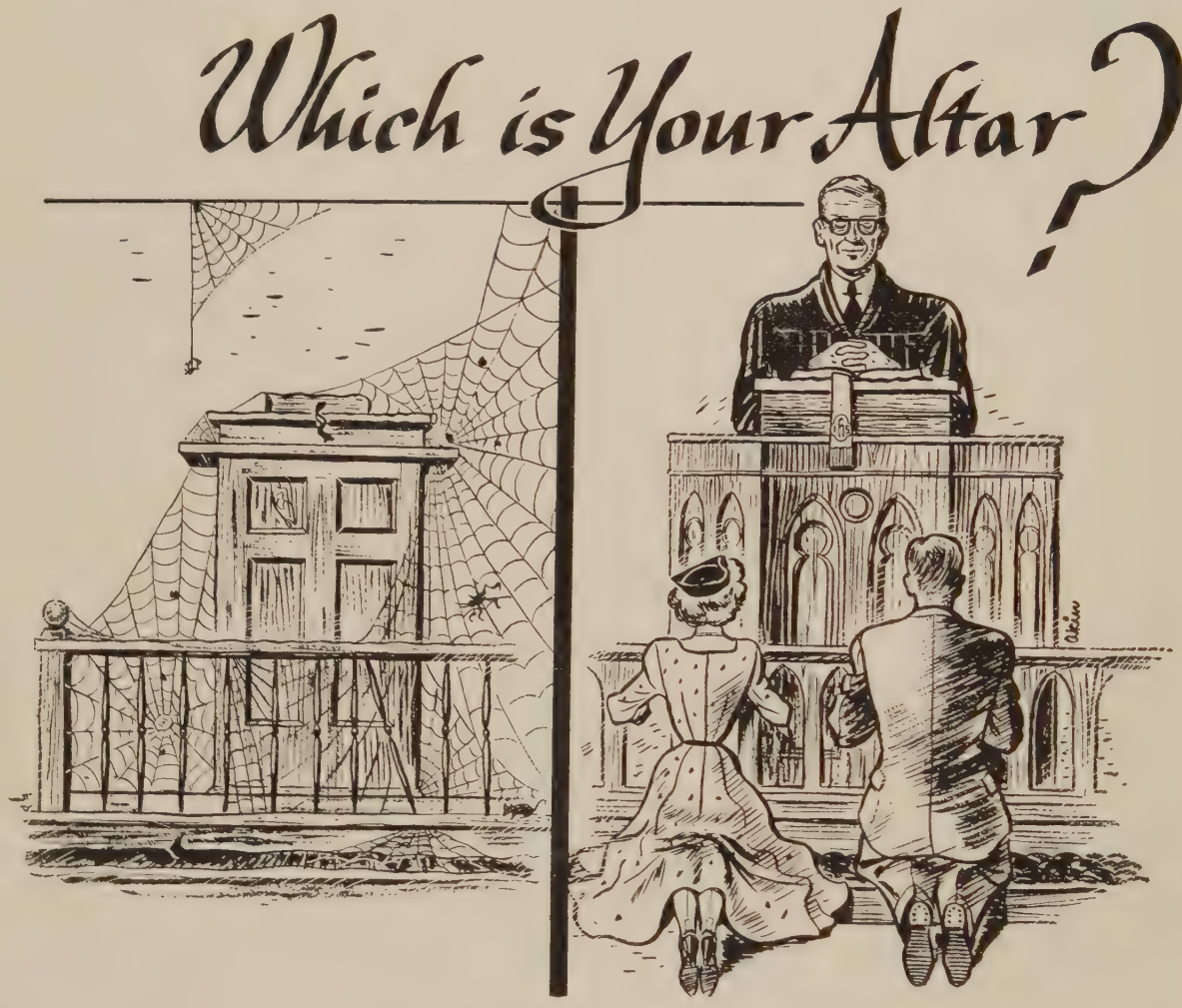
God Honored Our Efforts

God has honored our efforts thus far with 107 new church members—37 by profession of faith, 11 from other denominations and 59 by transfer. You

By Francis Ledford

ask us how it happened? I do not know except for two facts: (1) The pastor has never felt his nearness to God as much as now and his awareness that God is expecting him to be one of those who will lead our confused and enslaved world into the light and liberty of His holy Kingdom. We think we keep hearing Him say, "If the church fails me in this hour! O, if the church fails me!" We have determined that we will not fail Him! (2) The enthusiastic response of the Church to the uplifted challenge that God's Kingdom *can* come.

We believe there is a contagion of the Holy Spirit. No one seems to be amazed any more that the ranks of God's Legions are filling so rapidly. In fact, someone said recently that it would be unusual if there were to be a service when no one enlisted. I am convince that when souls clamor to become wor ers with Christ we shall fast approa the day of which it has been prophesi that "the knowledge of the Lord sh cover the earth" and "every knee sh bow and every tongue shall confe Christ as Lord." Hasten that da Lord, let the epidemic spread!



Join with 37 Other Protestant Denominations in the

UNITED WEEK OF VISITATION EVANGELISM

December 3-7

Order Visitation Evangelism Materials from

1908 Grand Ave. TIDINGS Nashville 4, Ten

A Watch Night Service at Home

John C. Irwin

We are told that Mr. Wesley's innova-
n of "watch night" was an effort to
leem an existing custom. The rough
al miners of Kingswood formerly
ent the last night of the year in
unken revelry. Some urged that the
stom be forbidden, but Mr. Wesley
ought it better to turn it to Christian
es. Accordingly, he announced a meet-
g for the night which proved such a
essed occasion that in early Meth-
ism watch night was for a time ob-
ved monthly "on the Friday nearest
e new moon, so that we might have
ht thither and back again."
The religious observance at watch
ght meetings is described as "one
more sermons, with hymns and
ayers . . . till a few minutes before
dnight; the assemblies then bow in
ent prayer till the clock strikes the
d of the old year and the advent of
e new; when, rising with a song of
aise or a covenant hymn, they disperse
ietly to their homes." (Stevens,
story of Methodism, Vol. II, p. 457.)
Perhaps it is again time to redeem
customed observances and turn them
Christian use. The year end in many
mmunities is a time of hilarity and
en of revelry. Many families scatter
the evening—parents, older and
unger children, all going separate
ys with their separate friends. What
ght be a time of solemnity and of
nily unity becomes merely another
secular evening with no overtones of heightened awareness of living.

To be sure, many Methodist families blend themselves with the larger family of God in the solemn watching for the new year in the church. But in many other places, where no church observance is planned, it would be richly rewarding to have a watch night at home.

In some homes where children are small, this home service might be held early in the evening, or as a special family devotion about the supper table. In other homes members of the family might promise to one another the last hours of the year. Particularly in these times, when so many families have absent members, there would be a deepening of family ties by such a year-end family fellowship.

Mother might make her contribution by arranging a worship center for the occasion. A well-chosen religious picture on table or fireplace, some Christmas greens and a candle would provide an atmosphere of worship. Father might select some favorite hymns. If there is a fireplace, the boys might be responsible for the fire. Other children could be asked to be ready with poetry and scripture for the new year. Place chairs for the family group in a semicircle about the worship center or fireplace.

A Bible and a Methodist Hymnal will furnish all the worship materials needed. (We believe there should be a Methodist Hymnal in every Methodist home!) Begin with a singing of favorite hymns. On this night you will want to include "O God, Our Help in Ages Past," "Lead, Kindly Light," and "Rock of Ages."

Read the first 14 verses of Psalm 139 or some other favorite Scripture. Let each member of the family give the Bible verse he would like to take into the new year as a motto. If any members have brought new year poems, have them read. Someone should read Tennyson's "Ring Out, Wild Bells," which may be found in the Methodist Hymnal.

Let there be a period of prayer—of thanksgiving for God's mercies during the old year and for His guidance in the new. Let the absent members of the family circle be remembered in prayer. To close the prayer period, someone might read Frances Havergal's "Another Year Is Dawning," also to be found in the Hymnal.

Just before midnight follow the old Methodist custom of joining in silent prayer as the year ends. Then, as the new year is born, let the family stand and join hands in a circle of fellowship as they sing a dedication for the days ahead: "O Master, Let Me Walk With Thee."

THE CHRISTMAS SONG

Long years ago o'er Bethlehem's hills was seen a wondrous thing;
As shepherds watched their sleeping flocks they heard the angels sing.
The anthem rolled among the clouds when earth was hushed and still.
Its notes proclaimed sweet peace on earth, to all mankind good will.

That song is sung by rich and poor, where'er the Christ is known;
'Tis sung in word, and sung in deeds, which bind all hearts in one.
Angels are still the choristers, but we the shepherds are,
To bear the message which they bring, to those both near and far.

—Leigh R. Brewer.

for *Christ* and His *Church*

By Donald Barnes

D. L. Moody, Billy Sunday, and Gypsy Smith were all great evangelists in their day. But in the closing years of his ministry each one confessed that his messages were directed mainly to church people. These men, in their later years, did not attract the mass of sinners and unconverted as they did in their early ministry; rather, their congregations consisted mostly of church members.

Those of us who attempt mass evangelistic meetings today are confronted with the same situation. (There are times when even church members do not attend!)

Some time ago I was thinking about this whole problem. And out of the facing of that issue came this question: "If church people alone come to mass evangelistic meetings, why not construct a meeting with church people in mind?" We did just that.

The meeting was called "For Christ and His Church." It was based upon the belief that after one makes a confession of Christ in his life, there are certain habits and disciplines which, if performed religiously, will help him to *grow* as a Christian. The Christian life is not a static life; rather, it is a process of growing. We "become the sons of God."

What are some of those habits and disciplines which enable one to grow as a Christian? Prayer is one. Christian stewardship is another. And there are such vital matters as the Christian home, and one's obligations to his church and community. Speaking *specifically,* there are the disciplines of prayer, Bible reading, tithing, home devotions and worship; Christian attitudes towards persons of different races, creeds, and nationalities; Christian opposition to gambling and drinking; church attendance; and loyalty to one's church vows, which include the others mentioned here.

All these things we believe. And we also believe that a genuine Christian will practice them. Not all our church people practice them, however. They may practice one or two, but for the most part, if these disciplines were listed as "degrees" on a thermometer, our "spiritual temperature" would be very low.

I shared these convictions with several of my friends in the ministry. I talked them over with laymen in my churches and other churches. All agreed that the plan was "sensible," "practical," and "workable."

Here is how the plan is set up and put into operation. The meetings are planned for six nights, Sunday through Friday, each service laying stress on a different theme. For instance:

SUNDAY evening—Theme: "What It Means to Be a Christian," stressing the importance of the Christian life, and the steps toward one's confession.

MONDAY—"Christian Stewardship," with emphasis upon the stewardship of one's time, talents, and tithe.

TUESDAY—"The Christian Home." What makes a Christian home? What are some of the marks of a Christian home? Grace at meals, yes. Also, family worship, family councils, family recreation.

WEDNESDAY—"The Christian at Church." How many people fail to live up to their obligations to the church to "uphold it by their prayers, their gifts, their presenc their service"? Why not ask them renew their vows?

THURSDAY—"Christian Attitudes This is a day when Christians ne to take a stand against race pre udice, gambling, alcoholism. We a asking people to "commit the selves to sobriety." Why not a them to go farther and refrain fr bigotry and games of chance?

FRIDAY—"My Decisions for Chr and His Church." Decision car are printed covering the five topi discussed on the five evenings pr vious. People can now make t decision which they feel th should make in order to be bet Christians and more loyal to t Church. The card is printed duplicate, perforated in the cent so that a copy may be retained the individual himself and a co left for the pastor. (The minist may use his copy for follow- work).

After the closing sermon, the car distributed beforehand, are considere Each statement is read by the pas and, after a moment of silent pray each person is asked to register decision. (If no decision is made, t space remains blank.) Then the peo are asked to bring their cards to t altar and there, kneeling, make th prayer of consecration. Then they a requested to depart quietly, after lea ing the minister's copy of the card the altar. Their prayer is the bened tion.

The results? Christians take n steps toward deepening their own spi tual lives and also the life of t Church. It is a real call to Christi living.

TRAINING YOUTH FOR CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH

More thorough training of boys and girls for Christ
d His Church is apparently the need across the Church.
growing number of pastors are aware of this need and
demanding more comprehensive materials than those
v provided officially. Yet the provisions of the *Discipline*
such training are all too widely neglected.

Paragraphs 123 and 124 of the 1948 *Discipline* read in
t:

'The pastor shall organize into classes the children of
Church when they have reached the age of twelve years,
at an earlier age when it is deemed advisable, and shall
et them for a minimum of 13 sessions, to instruct them
the nature, design, and obligations of Baptism, and in
truths of the Scriptures; to urge them to give regular
endance upon the public worship of the Church; to
vise, exhort, and encourage them to an immediate per-
al acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour;
d to instruct them in the use of the means of grace in
ing the Christian life . . .

'When children have thus been prepared, and shall
e evidence of understanding their Christian privileges
d obligations and of their Christian faith and purpose,
y may be admitted into full membership in the Church
cording to the provisions of the *Discipline*."

The writer's recent publication of a church membership
rse for Intermediates (12-14 years old) under the title
"I Choose the Church" [1] has revealed enthusiastic recep-
n for a course calling for from 16 to 24 class sessions,
d for the use of the best educational methods in such train-
g. At the same time it has uncovered a regrettable lack on
part of many pastors of understanding of the full re-
irements of such training, and the use of questionable ma-
ials and methods. Many find the recommended texts
dequate and make up their own outlines and procedures.
hers shorten the time to a few weeks, or turn it over to
men or Sunday-school teachers, thereby missing a great
portunity to shepherd the lambs of the flock. Is it any
nder that the boys and girls grow up neither knowing the
ster's voice nor learning to follow the leadership of their
familiar pastor?

The Pastor's Responsibility

Careful study of the Disciplinary requirements will reveal
t *the pastor carries the responsibility for this training.*
Paragraph 123 does provide that "the pastor may appoint one or more suitable persons to assist him in such class instruction for church membership" in order that it "may be properly related to the needs and experiences of the children and to the Christian teaching they are receiving in the church school." This recognizes that some pastors are not especially qualified as teachers and, in any case, need to supplement, not supplant, the work of the church-school teachers.

The lay leaders of youth should be enlisted in the training program and their work not disrupted by holding the class at the church-school hour. Rather, the church-school Closely Graded Lessons for Juniors and Intermediates may well be used as enrichment material for the membership course. The teachers can help recruit the membership class by giving names of those interested to the pastor, by calling in the homes to obtain decisions, and by holding extra sessions for use of pictures, excursions to Methodist institutions, and social activities of the class. Yet the major responsibility cannot be shifted to their shoulders, especially at the point of establishing the boys and girls in their decisions to follow Christ.

The Main Purpose

It will be noted also that the training under the pastor is not merely for churchmanship. Evidence seems to indicate that too many pastors are content to teach candidates the history and organization and sacraments of the Church and let it go at that. If the Church were an end in itself, this sole emphasis might be partially justified. But if we are to think of the Church as a means, not the end, of worship, service, study, and fellowship, the major part of the pastor's concern should not be with the Church but with the candidate's personal religious experience and understanding of the faith and practice of it. Note that paragraphs 123, 124 mention such topics as "the truths of Scripture," "regular attendance upon public worship," "personal acceptance of Jesus as Lord and Saviour," and "use of the means of grace in living the Christian life." That is why the writer's course provides for 10 sessions on "What Christians Believe and Practice," then follows with 5 sessions on "The Story of the Church." It is thus made clear that church membership is a means for implementing the decision of the boy or girl to follow Christ and serve in His Kingdom.

The Years for Training

The Closely Graded Lessons provided studies pointing

[1] "I Choose the Church." Minister's Manual and separate Pupil's
orkbook. Sixteen units of study. Price $1.00 each, postpaid.
be ordered directly from the author at Richwood, Ohio.

By Cecil Daniel Smith
Pastor, First Methodist Church, Richwood, Ohio

toward church membership at the close of the eleventh year, the winter quarter for Grade VI. Additional closely related topics are provided in several quarters of the new Intermediate Closely Graded Lessons. These are not designed for the pastor's use; the topics need to be organized differently if he is to find them most useful for special membership classes. Hence the necessity of special training texts organized from his point of view and for his special purposes. Certainly no pastor can assume that these courses, taught by laymen, suffice for church membership.

The church-school lessons are particularly weak at the point of commitment to Christ. In the most recent brochure describing the Methodist church-school literature (entitled "Pupil's Progress") no mention is made of the need for such decisions for Christ and His Church. The emphasis is on the church and on "understanding," not on personal commitment. It is assumed that children brought up in the faith will always consider themselves to be Christian, after the Horace Bushnell pattern. Yet every pastor is aware of the weaknesses of this point of view, as reflected in the hazy religious experience and unconsecrated attitudes of all too many members of the Church.

One does not need to adopt the neo-orthodox or Barthian position to recognize the realities of sin and the need of forgiveness and of a definite decision for Christ and His Church. Even the best-trained child, under the most wholesome influences of home, public school and church, needs to make a personal and wholehearted dedication of self to Christ and His Cause. And with this decision should come complete surrender of life, an asking for pardon from all offenses, and a sense of forgiveness and newness of life. This need not always take the form of the traditional conversion, in the sense of a turning away and turning back to God. For many whose faces have been kept toward the light, it should rather be an awakening of the meaning of pardon and of their own individual responsibility to God and Christ. Some such personal experience should be the prerequisite to training for church membership, with the training deepening and clarifying that decision.

At the age, in early adolescence, when boys and girls are beginning to recognize their own individuality and to assert their own independent judgment, this challenge to a Christian decision comes at an opportune time. It is doubtful whether many boys and girls of Junior age are psychologically ready for such a decision before the ages of 12 to 14. The practice of the ritualistic churches in holding confirmation classes only during these early adolescent years tends to confirm the wisdom of this timing. If we skim off the cream of such an experience by taking boys and girls into the Church at too early an age, we should not be surprised if we have only skimmed milk left. The writer's practice has been to include children under 12 in church training classes only where they show marked interest and have had exceptional background of home training and church experience. Certainly no boy or girl should be admitted to such training under the influence of a mass appeal; the decisions should be made in the home, alone, with full approval of the parents. And the decision should be the pupil's own, not to please the parents nor to increase the size of the class or pad the reports.

The Critical Years of Decision

Any such decision needs to be deepened by renewal and enlargement of vision. Provision needs to be made within the training course for such enrichment of understanding and enlargement of meaning of the commitment. Added to this central core of the training experience must come a practi of the "means of grace," such as will establish the boy girl in the habits of worship, both personal and public, sy tematic giving to the local church and to benevolenc (preferably on a 50-50 basis), and readiness to help church work at every opportunity. This takes time and ca hardly be accomplished in less than a full quarter's seri of weekly sessions. If we short-circuit this training by a fe weeks of hasty and superficial work, we are apt to stu the growth of the young life at the most critical stage religious development.

The Time of Year for Youth Evangelism

The best time of year for recruiting boys and girls f Christ and the Church is definitely not during the Lent season, when adult evangelism is stressed. During the pr Easter season the boys and girls are generally given secon ary attention, and the training program is greatly shorten or carried over into the spring season when the public-scho activities and outdoor attractions make it quite difficult to thorough work. If they are to be given a minimum of sessions, as the *Discipline* requires, their recruitment shou be scheduled before Christmas, and the training class start at least 13 weeks before reception into full membership. longer time for training is possible, the recruiting peri should come early in the fall.

"The Preview of Methodism's Advance," outlining t Board of Evangelism's program for evangelism, sugges taking Christ into the homes during Advent.

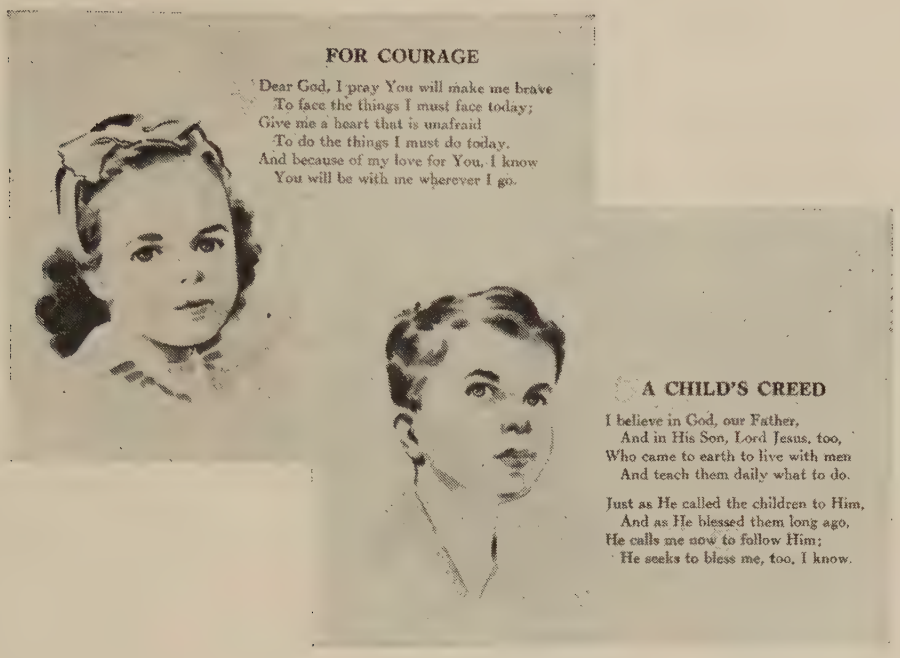
The writer believes that a Public Decision Day is hazardous procedure with children. The nature of su decisions can be explained in assembly or classes of t appropriate age group. But the pastor who appreciat the importance of this decision will take the time to ca personally in the home of every prospect and there gain t decision, free from the emotional or social influence of tho outside the family. The decision is apt to be far more vit if this is done.

Public recognition of decisions made at home in the ear fall or before Christmas can well be made on Christm Sunday or an earlier day. Why not climax the white gif of Christmas with the supreme gift of self to Christ on th day?

The official program calls also for "A training class f church membership organized for every age group." T writer would exclude Nursery, Kindergarten, Primary an Junior age groups from such classes. Intermediate trainin classes should be separate from senior-high-school and old youth and adults. "Every age group" should not inclu the Children's Division.

Dr. Leroy Belt was some years ago pastor of an Oh church and received a group of 20 adults into the Churc after an altar call. He was thinking of what a fine repo he could make of this adult ingathering, according to h own story, "all adults," when a small voice piped up an said, "Doctor Belt, I want to join church too." When th line parted to let the child in, Doctor Belt saw a small la "not much bigger than a cake of soap, and he never did g much bigger; but small as he was, Will Magruder becam the biggest catch I ever made for the Kingdom." That la went on to become an eloquent preacher for Christ and H Church. It is to avoid the neglect of such promising young sters that these suggestions are made for a more timely an more thorough emphasis upon the evangelism of youth.

POEMS OF PRAYER AND PRAISE


FOR COURAGE
Dear God, I pray You will make me brave
To face the things I must face today;
Give me a heart that is unafraid
To do the things I must do today.
And because of my love for You, I know
You will be with me wherever I go.
A CHILD'S CREED
I believe in God, our Father,
And in His Son, Lord Jesus, too,
Who came to earth to live with men
And teach them daily what to do.
Just as He called the children to Him,
And as He blessed them long ago,
He calls me now to follow Him;
He seeks to bless me, too, I know.

This Christmas you can give the new book, Children's Prayers, with the assurance that it will be an attractive and beautiful present and at the same time a gift of deep spiritual meaning that will help the child as he ventures into the field of devotion.

Children's Prayers

by Lucy Gray Kendall with illustrations by Sam Leach

The author has captured the child heart and the child mind with these poems and prayers. They sing of the joy and wonder of God's world. They emphasize God's love and care. The charming illustrations and the child-sized format (4½ by 3½ inches) will make it a joyful and precious possession of every child.

Single copy 35 cents. Three copies $1.00

The Upper Room

1908 Grand Avenue **Nashville 4, Tennessee**

Tidings of Great Joy

A Sunday Evening Picture Sermon

DURING the evening service at sermon time, the lights of the church are lowered to a minimum by an usher. Then the speaker announces his subject. While this is being done a switch is pulled and an S.V.E. projector throws the painting by Bernard Plockhorst upon the wall over the pulpit. This painting so projected from a 2x2 slide is almost life size. The worship of the evening is enhanced by the preparation beforehand.

In the rear of our church are high casement windows. In one of these the projector is placed and focused hours before the service. The projector cord is connected to an outlet outside the sanctuary altogether so that the people see neither the projector nor the operator.

This picture is on all through the sermon. I usually begin the sermon by telling something of the life of the artist and his religious experience. Then I speak about the outstanding characteristics of the painting. In this case I told about the fact that Plockhorst uses three shepherds, a father, mother, and almost grown son. There are traditionally five or six shepherds. The text of this sermon naturally is that which inspired Plockhorst—"And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy . . ."—Luke 2:10-11.

I used this outline: 1. THE FIRST GOSPEL LOCATION—the fact that 700 years before this time Micah had prophesied Bethlehem and that a pagan emperor assisted the fulfillment. Also, the fact that Bethlehem means "House of Bread." Jesus the Bread of Life, etc. Also, the story of St. Mary's Hospital Bethlehem, England, built in 1247. Two hundred years later it was changed to a hospital for the insane. The noise and confusion led to a contraction and corruption of the name Bethlehem to Bedlam. And today by our secularism we make Bedlam out of Bethlehem, etc.

II. THE FIRST GOSPEL SERMON—that of the angel, etc.

III. THE FIRST GOSPEL AUDIENCE—not the high, but the humble shepherds.

IV. THE FIRST GOSPEL SURRENDER—the shepherds said, "Let us now go . . .

They left their sheep at great risk and hastened to the Lord, etc.

When the sermon is finished the projector is extinguished by remote control and the lights raised for the closing hymn.

At the left is a reproduction of the famous painting, "Tidings of Great Joy," by Bernhard Plockhorst, which is projected, almost life-size, over the pulpit while the sermon outlined in the article above is being presented.

Books

PARSONAGE DOORWAY

Anna Laura Gebhard, Abingdon Cokesbury Press, 1950. $1.75.

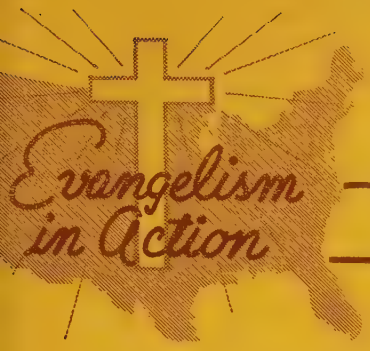
Parsonage Doorway is a delightful collection of incidents common to the very young. Describing the activities of four lively children who live in the house next door to the church Anna Laura Gebhard effectively portrays the minor tragedies and the major triumphs of a parsonage family. Here is the vivid narrative of a home as wise parenthood can shape its character. Mrs. Gebhard shows clearly that religious training cannot begin too early in life and that commonplace things can radiate the glory of God. The parsonage doorway thus becomes a symbol of faith and friendship and wholesome family living.

This book is an eloquent plea for the proper training of our children. Providing the young with a guide to spiritual living, deepening their understanding by sharing their experiences, and cultivating their talent to appreciate the true and the beautiful is the task of the home whether it be the parsonage or the house further down the street.

MONK IN ARMOUR

Gladys H. Barr, Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1950. $3.00.

This first novel from Abingdon-Cokesbury Press tells the dramatic story of a young and restless scholar who, becoming a monk in his search for peace, ultimately inflames the Protestant Reformation. Mrs. Barr skillfully describes the titanic struggles through which Martin Luther reached the convictions that compelled him to put on the full armour of God.



SUPPLEMENT TO SHEPHERDS

DECEMBER, 1950

ganize New Church

An evangelistic campaign just npleted in Campbellsville, Kenky (Louisville Conference), has ulted in the organization of a new gregation of 49 members and the chase of a lot upon which to conct a church building.

The revival was held in a tent and s enthusiastically supported by D. Jones, District Superintendent, pastor, W. C. Frank, and his peo- of First Church.

The offering to start the new church s taken the last night of the meet-. Money pledged on the lot and lding totaled $4,500. Prospects are a strong congregation and a full-e pastor.

The Conference plans to continue the coming year the district Visitan Evangelism programs which ve succeeded so wonderfully in districts this year. This work was ected by J. Lester McGee, presint of the Louisville Conference ard of Evangelism.

terature Gifts

The Memphis Conference Board of angelism sends an introductory, mplimentary subscription to *Shepds* to all charge chairman of Comttees on Membership and Evangem in the Conference.

The Board, at the last annual Conence meeting, presented a set of e books to each of the young men o were admitted to the Conference trial.

an Prayer Retreat

The Memphis Conference Board of angelism has planned a prayer treat for the ministers, to be held Jackson, Tennessee, January 15 to , with Bishop Ralph S. Cushman, shop William Watkins, and Dr. ward P. Powell as speakers.

Denominations Unite in Advance Effort

The Methodist churches of Washington, D. C., joined with the other denominations through the Washington Federation of Churches in the United Evangelistic Advance Effort, October 29-November 3.

Dr. Robert McCracken of Riverside Church, New York City, addressed a large Protestant rally at Uline Arena, Washington, on the evening of October 29. During the next five days, 20 area preaching missions were held simultaneously. Monday through Friday, there were noon-day services at Epiphany Episcopal Church, following one-hour pastors' seminars on evangelism each day. Eleven Bible lectures were presented in as many areas daily throughout the five-day period. Visiting ministers spoke in clubs, on the radio, and at meetings of various special groups.

On the Washington West District the plan is to follow up the Preaching Mission with four simultaneous area or sub-district meetings on a given Sunday evening. Most of the churches of the District will join in a Visitation Endeavor, December 3-7.

Pray for These Missions

Kansas-Nebraska Area	Oct. 28-Nov. 5; Nov. 11-19
Syracuse Area	Nov. 3-12
Metropolitan Baltimore	Nov. 24-Dec. 3
Wyoming Conference	Nov. 27-Dec. 3
Arizona	Dec. 1-8
Des Moines Area	Dec. 1-10
Pittsburgh Area	Feb. 17-25; Feb. 3-11

"More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of."

Plan New Parish

A large-scale extension program to help meet religious needs of the rapidly expanding residential areas of Nashville, Tennessee, is being developed by The Methodist Church, and separate plans are under way for establishment of a sizeable Methodist congregation in the Belle Meade section.

J. Dallas Bass, superintendent of the Nashville District, announced creation of a special parish which is expected to consist of six temporary congregations gathering in improvised meeting places until permanent churches can be organized and established.

Carl Elkins, pastor of St. John's Methodist Church, will serve as superintendent of the new "larger" parish. Students of the Vanderbilt University School of Religion will serve as ministers. Trained workers for other phases of church activities will be supplied by Scarritt College.

Mathis Memorial Church is the first of the new parish groups to be formed. Locations of the other churches will be announced as details are worked out.

The parish is being set up by the Methodist Board of Missions and Church Extension.

Join in Advance

Seventy-eight Methodist churches of Arizona will participate in the "Calling Arizona to Christ" Advance, December 3-8.

With simultaneous Visitation and Preaching, the churches expect to reach thousands of new families and bring a spiritual revival in every church. The goal is 1,043 members on confession of faith by Christmas Sunday—"1 for 14."

The churches will share in meeting the expenses of delegates to the Advance by receiving offerings Sunday through Friday nights and sending the receipts to a central treasurer.

Young People Increase Church Membership Roll

The Seattle (Washington) Japanese Methodist Church reports 51 new converts added to the membership roll. More than half of this number are students of the University of Washington, a fact which speaks well for the church young people's activities.

Thomas J. Machida, Pacific Japanese Conference Chairman, says: "For the coming fall evangelistic program we are going to have a revitalized interest and activity in visitation evangelism (two by two), utilizing the mass meeting with Dr. Kagawa in November. We will exchange our pastoral duty for one week in each station on our district level."

District Program Adopted

The following 10-point program has been adopted for the districts of the East Oklahoma Conference for 1950-51.

1. Each district hold a spiritual retreat under the direction of the District Superintendent and District Secretary of Evangelism in October. At this retreat the total plan for the district program of evangelism to be worked out for action.
2. The goal for this year the same as last year: One to fourteen (1 to 14) to be won on profession of faith.
3. Each district to hold sub-district evangelistic rallies under the direction of the District Superintendent, District Secretary of Evangelism, and District Lay Leader. These will be schools of evangelism for training ministers, laymen, and Sunday school teachers, in methods of winning children, youth, and adults to Christ and the Church.
4. That the training charts, "They went forth two by two," be used to train laymen in each local church. Regular visitation by a Fishermen's Club under the direction of the pastor and charge lay leader.
5. That the program of evangelism of the General Board be followed, especially the "Advance during the six victorious months from October to Easter."
6. That two district-wide visitation evangelism campaigns be held this year.
7. That churches in each district hold a simultaneous visitation and revival campaign during the year.
8. That each pastor present the plan to the membership: "Each member win a member for Christ and the Church before May 15, 1951."
9. That a quarterly check-up be made to the District Superintendent and Conference Secretary of Evangelism on the progress of the year's program; and that where a district or church needs additional assistance the District Superintendent, District Secretary of Evangelism, or Conference Secretary of Evangelism be authorized to call on other districts for the needed assistance to meet the goal of evangelism for the year.
10. That we urge our people to spend certain periods during the day in "Meditation and Prayer" for the year of evangelism in the conference and general church.

Hold Revival Series

The Ministerial Association of Alexandria, Indiana, held a series of revival meetings, October 15 to 25, in the pavilion in Beulah Park, formerly the Beulah Park Camp Grounds. The ministers of the association served as the evangelists for the meetings.

Lists Four Types of Evangelistic Work

Ministers should do four types o evangelistic work, delegates to th Methodist Regional Conference hel recently in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, wer told.

As outlined in an address b Bishop Marshall R. Reed of Michigan a minister should:

1. Do the work of a preacher-evan gelist.
2. Do the work of a personal evan gelist.
3. Do the work of a social evange list.
4. Do the work of a sustainin evangelist.

Evangelism, Bishop Reed said, i the normal, healthy work of a min ister and should not be done onl under the pressure of a program but should be carried on at all times To the layman, he said, it mean bearing witness to faith.

Bishop Reed stated that evange listic preaching is a question of mo tivation. The minister should b preaching a message, not jus preaching because the time ha come for a sermon.

Evangelistic Opportunity

The Jurisdictional Council, at it meeting in Dallas, Texas, on Septem ber 21, gave careful consideration t the opportunities for evangelism i the jurisdiction. There were approx mately 440 pastoral charges, an 1,980 individual churches which re ported no accessions on profession o faith last year.

In light of the growing populatio in certain sections of the jurisdiction and in view of the fact that nearl one-half the population in all section of the jurisdiction are unchurched it is the conviction of the Council tha Methodism can reach a much large number of people than has been th case in recent years.

ONE-DAY DISTRICT MEETINGS

During November let every district superintendent and district secretary of evangelism promote a great one-day district evangelistic rally. Bring the people together on the district level in the interest of Christ and His Church. Present the need for reclaiming the inactive and redeeming the unchurched. Emphasize the opportunities and obligations involved in visitation evangelism. Share the Action Program of Methodism's Six Victorious Months with every church on your district NOW by holding a well-planned and properly promoted evangelistic rally. "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so."

Bring Christ

to the World

Bring the World

to Christ

"See You in Church Sunday" posters, stickers, letterheads, and cards are printed with rich blue ink

Number			Amount
_____	**SHEETS OF STAMPS,** saying "See You in Church Sunday"	25¢ per sheet of 100	_____
_____	**POSTERS** (14x11 inches) saying "See You in Church Sunday" Two-ply cardboard, for advertising in stores and other public places.	5¢ each	_____
_____	**Sets of POSTER SERIES** (11x8½ inches) Five different posters to the set, each with a different message. Will attract attention. Sets not broken.	25¢ per set; 5 sets for $1.00	_____
_____	**WINDOW STICKERS** (4¼x3⅛ inches) Put a sticker in the window of every home and automobile.	50¢ per 100	_____
_____	**SMALL STICKERS** (same size as at top of this page) For sticking on letters, letterheads, automobiles, etc.	50¢ per 100	_____
_____	**LARGE MATS** (2 column—about 4x3 inches) For newspapers and other advertising.	15¢ each	_____
_____	**SMALL MATS** (1 column—same as at top of page) Be sure and furnish your newspaper articles on "See You in Church Sunday"	15¢ each	_____
_____	**LETTERHEADS** (8½x11 inches) with "See You in Church Sunday" emblem Excellent for sending out a letter on church attendance. Use your regular church envelopes for this.	75¢ per 100	_____
_____	**BUTTONS**—Celluloid "See You in Church Sunday" buttons For pinning on coat lapels, shirts, dresses, etc. Will stimulate attendance, especially among children and youth. Order in lots of 50 or 100.	$3.00 per 100	_____
_____	**"YOUR CHURCH IS CALLING YOU"** A "See You in Church Sunday" invitation card suitable for mailing or carrying to homes.	60¢ per 100	_____
_____	**"THE CHURCH HELPS MY FAITH,"** a card, 5½x3½ inches	60¢ per 100	_____
_____	**INSTRUCTIONS FOR VISITORS** A booklet that every "See You in Church Sunday" loyalty attendance visitor should have in advance. It will be his inspiration and guide.	5¢ each	_____
_____	**WORKER'S AGREEMENT CARD** for enlisting the workers. If the worker signs a duplicate card for himself, it will be helpful.	50¢ per 100	_____
_____	**CHURCH LOYALTY COVENANT CARD**	50¢ per 100	_____
_____	**LOYALTY ASSIGNMENT ENVELOPES** For making assignments to the visitors and receiving their reports. Order in multiples of 25.	60¢ per 100	_____
_____	**ATTENDANCE REGISTRATION CARDS** to check attendance and find prospects. Order one for every person who will attend on the Sundays you plan to register the attendance.	50¢ per 100	_____
_____	**MY CHURCH ATTENDANCE RECORD** for a person to check his own attendance. This card allows a person to check his own attendance, Sunday by Sunday, through Christmas.	50¢ per 100	_____
_____	**I GO TO CHURCH SUNDAY.** New leaflet by Dr. George W. Crane This leaflet by the eminent newspaper columnist should be in every home.	$1.50 per 100	_____
_____	**LET'S GO TO CHURCH,** four-page leaflet that pastors like	$1.00 per 100	_____
_____	**WHY I GO TO CHURCH,** reprint of a famous article from *Cornet*	$1.00 per 100	_____
_____	**I BELIEVE IN THE CHURCH.** A giving of reasons for belief in the church.	$1.50 per 100	_____
_____	**WHEN YOU ATTEND,** a card on church attendance for mailing or handing out	60¢ per 100	_____
_____	**I WILL UPHOLD THE CHURCH.** 24-page booklet by Homer J. R. Elford.	10¢ each; 12 for $1.00	_____
_____	**MOVIE TRAILER NO. 1** (40 seconds) "See You in Church Sunday." Nondenominational.	$7.50	_____
_____	**MOVIE TRAILER NO. 2** (30 seconds) "See You in Church Sunday." Nondenominational.	$5.00	_____

TIDINGS ORDER BLANK

MEET THE CHALLENGE OF THE NEW HALF-CENTURY

Number Amount

VISITATION EVANGELISM

___ VISITATION EVANGELISM PACKET—Contains recommended numbers of all visitation (not religious census) materials; prepared to meet the needs of every church. Order to the nearest 100 active members. Orders of 100—$3.00 per packet; orders of 200 and over—$2.50 per 100.

( ) Check here if you are participating in a special Area or Conference United Evangelistic Mission, so special visitation cards will be included.

___ COMMISSIONING SERVICE FOR PERSONAL AND VISITATION EVANGELISM WORKERS—for use as a part of a regular church service— 2¢ each ___

_____ THE FISHERMEN'S CLUB PACKET—contains 7 booklets "The Fishermen's Club"; 15 Fishermen's Club Enrollment Cards; 15 Fishermen's Club Membership Cards; 10 Fishermen's Club Blue Certificates (for winning 5 persons to Christ); 10 Fishermen's Club Silver Certificates (for winning 10 persons to Christ); 5 Fishermen's Club Gold Certificates (for winning 25 persons to Christ.) $1.00 ___

TURN OVER CHARTS—"They Went Forth—Two by Two." These charts are indispensable for training laymen in visitation evangelism. May be used over and over again during the years. 118 large, poster-size pages. Two colors, $12.00

___ BE A MEMBER WHERE YOU ARE—for persons whose membership is out of your community. $2.00 per 100 ___

___ ASSIMILATING NEW MEMBERS. Practical suggestions for building new members into the life of the church. Ideal for use of Membership and Evangelism Committee. 10¢ each; 6 for 50¢ ___

___ HOW TO BE A FELLOWSHIP FRIEND. A leaflet for every Fellowship Friend. 5¢ a copy; 10 or more, 2¢ each ___

___ ASSIMILATION PACKET. Assorted materials invaluable for pastors and membership and evangelism committees in planning their assimilation program—$1.00

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___ NEW LIFE IN CHRIST: THE NEW TESTAMENT WITNESS TO THE NEW BIRTH, by Charles M. Laymon. A wholesome approach to a vital subject. 35¢ each; 3 copies, $1.00; 10 copies, $3.00; 25 or more, 25¢ per copy. All quantity prices to one address.

_____ THE PROTESTANT PACKET—contains a variety of helpful leaflets emphasizing Protestant faith and principles.—$1.00

___ THE BELIEFS OF A METHODIST CHRISTIAN, by Clinton M. Cherry. Helpful to adults and young people. Too mature for children. 35¢ each; 10 for $3.00 ___

___ OUR PROTESTANT FAITH, by William Cannon. 35¢ each; 3 for $1.00; 10 for $3.00 ___

___ THE PROTESTANT PRIMER, by Clarence Seidenspinner. 25¢ each, any quantity ___

___ THE METHODIST PRIMER, by Charles C. Selecman. 25¢ each; 25 or more, 20¢ each ___

TIDINGS, 1908 Grand Ave., Nashville 4, Tenn.

Please fill my order as checked.

( ) Payment enclosed ( ) Charge to treasurer ( ) Charge to my account

Rev., Mr., Mrs., Miss NAME

ADDRESS

Church Treasurer

Address

Date _____ Order placed by _____

Money spent by a church for evangelistic literature is money wisely spent

PREACHING AND THE PREACHER

By Harry H. Truax, Pastor, Girardville, Pennsylvania

VE live in a day when clear thinking is not easy, but when, as never fore in the life of our nation, clear nking is needed. Thinking is hard rk. Francis L. Patton gave a great dress in Princeton, New Jersey, in mmemoration of the life and work of ofessor Benjamin B. Warfield. The llowing brief extract cannot fail to be help to ministers, both young and d. "Thinking," said he, "is hard work. eaching is no easy task. It is when u have wrestled through the night th the angel of the Lord that blessing mes in the clear vision and the goodly arls of speech. When the work of is sort is at its height, you will not st because you ought to, but because u cannot eat. You will not pray beuse you ought to pray; you will pray cause you cannot help it. For this nd goeth not out but by prayer and sting.

"Use all the aids to reflection you n command. Live on terms of intelctual fellowship with men of other llings and borrow of their oil to fill ur lamps. Browse on the uplands like rnold's 'High Pasturing Kine' with ly now and then the tinkling of a ll to tell those in the valley below here you are. Take time for patient ooding on your theme; and out of your tercourse with men, out of the chaprs in your experience, out of the books u may not have seen for years, illusations will flock to the open casement your soul like doves to their windows.

"And, when your message is prered, go from your study to your pult as Savonarola went from his cell pour a flood of molten speech upon e great audience that awaited him. o into your pulpit when thought has en fused in the hot fire of emotion, eling, if you will, your weakness and worthiness. Go with whispered prayer r help upon your lips, and by divine ace, when you feel that you are weak u will be strong. Then your message ill be an arrow shot from the tense bowstring of conviction, and God Himself will direct its flight."

Too Many Things to Do

A contemporary thinks many ministers fail because they have too many things to do. He says: "The present-day preacher is a many-sided personality whose curse is scatteration." No longer may we call the minister the preacher, for this is reckoned among the least of his tasks. He is the organizer, the executive, the parish visitor, the debt raiser, the committee chairman, the marrier, the buyer, the speech maker, the lecturer, and sometimes, perhaps, the janitor. But there is no assumption that he is, "par excellence," the preacher.

The spiritual side, which is the most important of all, is likely to be neglected if not given first place. No one needs time for devotional reading and prayer as does the pastor, upon whom devolve so many complex duties which he cannot accomplish in his own strength.

A great salesman who had been addressing a mass meeting was later asked by one of his audience, "What do you think is the matter with our preaching, that it does not thrill men as it did in the days of Wesley and Whitefield?" His answer was: "I think it is because you preachers have lost the thrill and the passion." We ought to visualize the needs of a "lost world." You and I must see this world just as Jesus saw it, and be moved to infinite compassion by it. Then the halo of glory, of being able to carry to it the compassionate, redeeming love of God, will thrill us with divine joy.

"How comes it," demanded a Bishop Garrick, "that I, in expounding divine truth, produce so little effect upon my congregation, while you can so easily arouse the passions of your audiences by the presentation of fiction?" The answer, short and pithy, was: "Because I recite fiction as if it were the truth, and you recite truth as if it were fiction."

Samuel W. Graffin, one-time secretary of the West Side Y.M.C.A., New York, said, "If we believe that sinners will be lost forever without salvation; that Jesus came to reveal the love of God to a sinful world; that He died on the cross for sinners; and that he founded a Church whose duty and privilege it is to carry on His program, we must preach as if we believed it, and with no uncertain sound."

No Single Test

There is no single test of good preaching, but there is a test for the greatness of a preacher's ministry. The sermon is by no means all of his work, important as that is. Oratory is not merely declamation. Jesus conversed with men in groups, large and small. He did denounce His enemies with volcanic force when necessary, but He was usually instructive and winning. He had the charm of simplicity and power. Men hung on His words, listening. Soldiers, sent to arrest Him, came away with the excuse that "never man spake like this man." Jesus used epigram, aphorism, proverb, parable, question, paradox, metaphor, humor, irony, sarcasm, denunciation and pathos. His illustrations are the despair of all imitators. His was a real eloquence.

O. S. Davis has a chapter in his book, *Evangelistic Preaching,* in which he says: "The chief factor in preaching is personality. The conviction and experience of the preacher are both absolutely necessary to the true sermon, and to effective preaching.

Albert J. Lyman, himself a great preacher, said, "Preaching is an incarnation." When the Gospel actually lives in a man, then he can preach a living Gospel. The man who himself knows the redemptive love and power of Christ will never need to question his credentials. That which the "good news" has done for him, he knows it

will do for others. His message has not lost its power, and his Master still lives.

The preacher must believe tremendously in the great verities of the Christian life, and that he has a commission fresh from the courts of Heaven to declare them to the people. If he is doubtful of the temper of the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, he will do no great execution with it. The question of where it was forged, and in what shop, who etched its inscription and wrought its scabbard, has little or nothing to do with the quality of its steel.

Too Much Time Wasted

Altogether too much time is wasted deciding whether we will use this oar or the other; whether we will take the rowboat or the gasoline launch; whether we will invite sinners to the altar or have them sign a card or raise the hand, or meet us in the prayer room after the service. If there is a soul floundering in the billows of sin, *throw* out the life line, whether it be made of hemp, silken cords, or cotton; whether it be thrown out by the hand of an evangelist, a specialist, the pastor of the church, or a sweet singer of Israel. What does it matter as long as a soul may be rescued, a sinner saved, or a backslider reclaimed?

We must have a very clear conception of the lost condition of men out of Christ, and the passion which consumed our Lord must fairly master us. So long as we can be content and comforted with good salaries and social enjoyment while men are sweeping by unto death and eternal damnation, we have no right to call ourselves followers of Jesus.

There is something magnetic about one who is giving oral expression to a great truth. And if he believes it, if he is wholly sure of it, there will be a sort of confirmatory bearing about him which the people will discern and which will help the message in ways that will never be known. For, somehow, the truths that we believe through and through get an audience, even when we express them poorly. We are told by some that if the preacher will open his mouth the Lord will fill it, but, on the whole, it is the man who has studied hardest and worked most diligently whom the Lord can use as His messenger.

A wonderful sense of freedom is born in the preacher's mind and heart when he catches the harmony between the two phases of his message, and knows that he is to speak to the individual and to the community, bringing to both a message of such mighty molding power that it will shape to better condition all the life of the generation.

The Chief Single Agency

There is no other person in the community who has such a message. There is no other business in the community comparable to his. The preacher may have a small salary, and there may be those who will disparage his work, but when the forces of the community are summed up according to their value in making the highest life of all, the Christian minister, vitalized by the consciousness of the wonderful and holy task, is the chief single agency in the whole body, acting consistently to bring forth all the highest and best qualities in the individual and society and shaping it all according to the mighty ideals of the Kingdom of God.

That man endued with power and charged with the holy task is the most important and commanding figure in the whole complex system of community life. He *ought* to preach with the conviction and power of a prophet, for he is doing business with eternal things. He is the Evangelist of God. The doctor trusts his remedy; the surgeon believes in his operation; the advocate has confidence in the justice of his cause. Is the preacher "dead sure" of his message? It is charged that the modern pulpit is remote from life and that much preaching is perfunctory. If that is so, would it be because of a lack of blazing conviction on the part of the preacher? As the preacher looks into his own life, and into the needy lives of others, into the nation and the world, he must be *sure* that he has the message and the power that will bring men to God, and man and man perfectly together. This gospel the modern preacher must know as clearly as Paul knew it. "It is the power of God unto salvation to all who believe it."

Courage to Denounce Sin

Brother preacher, have you ever gone into your pulpit with a message that you felt was given you by the Lord, but, when you saw certain ones come in and take their places in the pew, you began to feel uneasy and tried to find some way of modifying some part or parts of your carefully-prepared sermon? Some way of putting on the soft pedal, because of some direct or indirect favors received? Preachers need courage to denounce sin and faithfully warn against the ruin it brings, in spite of the fact—or perhaps because of the fact—that farmer so-and-so, who recently sent a share of his butchering to the parsonage, is in the audience; or because there is the honorable so-and-so who, at a recent meeting of the Official Board of Quarterly Conference, very enthusiastically recommended a raise in the pastor's salary. But still, farmer so-and-so persists in his violation of the Sabbath and the honorable so-and-so continues to practice dishonesty and meanness in politics and public life. Many preachers have lost their power and their hold on their people because they have parted with their birthright for a mess of pottage.

"Ours is the most worthwhile work beneath the stars," says Dr. George Truett in his address to preachers. Phillips Brooks once said, in addressing a large gathering of businessmen in Boston at a noonday luncheon: "I am sorry for all of you fellows who are not parsons."

I believe the following words of Paul express the sentiments of all preachers: "I thank Christ Jesus my Lord, who hath enabled me, for that He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry."

"The Bible—a Light and Guide"

Friday, Dec. 1 ..... Psalms 43
2 ..... Psalms 119:105-112
Sunday, Dec. 3 .... Proverbs 4:1-19
4 ..... John 8:1-19
5 ..... John 12:23-36
6 ..... II Peter 1
7 ..... Isaiah 55
8 ..... Psalms 91
9 ..... Psalms 23

Universal Bible
Sunday, Dec. 10
Psalms 119:97-104
11 ..... Luke 15
12 ..... Isaiah 40:1-8, 28-31
13 ..... I Corinthians 13
14 ..... I John 3
15 ..... Romans 12
16 ..... Matthew 25
Sunday, Dec. 17 ..... John 3:1-21
18 ..... John 14
19 ..... Matthew 11
20 ..... Hebrews 12:1-13
21 ..... Revelation 21:1-7, 22-27
22 ..... John 17
23 ..... Isaiah 53
Sunday, Dec. 24 .. Matthew 1:18-25
Christmas, Dec. 25 .. Matthew 2:1-12

"Occupy till I come," is the command hich the Lord gave His church for is age. Every Christian must face e fact that he has an inescapable re- onsibility to let others know about od's offer of eternal life in Christ sus.

Gospel tracts are a highly effective eans whereby all Christians may ach the lost, but our experience in- cates that certain principles must be pt in mind if the best results are to be tained.

Herewith are 10 rules for tract ers:

1. Never distribute tracts without raying.

You cannot win a soul to Christ, nor n any tract. Only the Holy Spirit n do this work. So be sure to pray hile you work. Ask the Lord to direct u to the person to whom He would ve you hand a tract. Ask Him to help u select the right tract for the person. sk Him to bless the tract and the ader.

2. Give tracts which are appropriate.

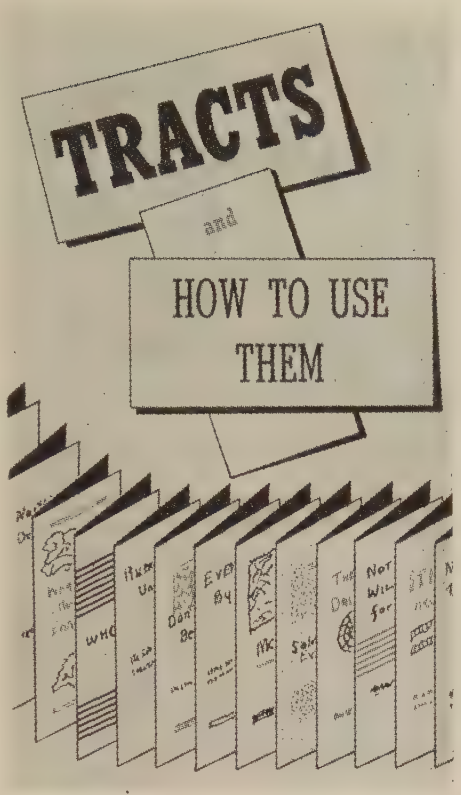
A tract should fit the needs of the erson to whom it is handed.

3. Talk with your subject if possible.

This will help you to learn his eeds and stimulate his interest. Try to eer the conversation around so that u can offer him your tract. If you n get him to ask for it, so much the tter. At least get him to agree to ad it before you give it to him.

4. Always offer tracts with a smile.

A salesman out to close a deal uses s most friendly manner; the tract stributor should do likewise. A frown- g face or an argumentative approach ill lose a reading for your tract. It amazing how seldom a tract will be



This article is an abstract of a tract published by the American Tract Society, New York City. (Used by permission.)

rejected if it is offered with a genuinely friendly smile.

5. Don't force tracts upon people.

As a rule, when tracts are distributed promiscuously to every passerby, most of them are discarded. And a sidewalk littered with tracts cheapens the cause of leaflet evangelism and is not a good testimony to the Lord. It is usually better to distribute a dozen tracts carefully, prayerfully and judiciously, than to hand out a hundred tracts indiscriminately.

6. Use only attractive tracts.

You — and your Lord — will be judged by the equipment you use. The day of the newsprint tract, with fine type and no illustrations, is almost over. Use tracts that are well-written, free from grammatical errors and crude style.

7. Keep your tracts in good condition.

Make sure your leaflets are clean and fresh when you hand them out. A day or two in your pocket will make them dog-eared and bedraggled.

8. Use only positive, constructive tracts.

Avoid tracts which make vicious attacks on any religion or group. Our job is not to attack but to present the positive truth of the gospel.

9. Think up new ways to use tracts.

Use tracts in business and personal letters, in paying bills, with greeting cards, and in books you loan to friends. Mail them in envelopes, even to people you don't know. Put them judiciously where they are likely to be picked up and read. Be original and try to invent new ways of distributing them.

10. Stop waiting for the time when you will be able to distribute hundreds of tracts a week—it may never come. Begin using at least one tract every day—and you will be amazed at how the Lord will bless your work and at the satisfaction it will afford you.

(Tidings Tract-of-the-Month Club provides you with helpful evangelistic materials for widespread distribution. Write today to Tidings, 1908 Grand Avenue, Nashville 4, Tennessee.)

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TIMELY IN EMPHASIS

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The Need Today for---

CONVERSION

By Mack B. Stokes
Professor Candler School of Theology
Emory University, Georgia

FEW things more clearly indicate that we are the children of fashion than the tendency to regard conversion as a thing of the past. Just as the styles of our clothes change from year to year, so is it with our beliefs and attitudes. There was a time when people accepted the need of conversion but belittled the place of gradual development in Christian character. The pendulum has swung. So now people make much of the wonders of educational processes and neglect conversion as an instrument for the reconstruction of human life. In this we are the toys of a day. We are children of the dragon's teeth, victims of custom and convention.

Our laziness and contentment with average living work together with our fashions of thought to blind us to the ageless need for a fundamental religious conversion. We might all readily acknowledge the need for certain changes in our attitudes. We would grant that our self-centeredness goes beyond its bounds occasionally and that love should be a more steady force within us. We see, now and then, that our prejudices need to be driven out by the light of God's truth. In our best moments we know that changes in our lives are needed. But few people see the absolute urgency of a fundamental revolution in their inner souls. We are quite happy to be told that our trouble is that we are immature. For then we hope *gradually* to move toward maturity.

And all the while life slips away without *any* basic changes. Anything pleases us that does not make absolute demands upon us *now*. So, all along we miss one of the most important facts about us, namely, that it is much easier to make one basic decision which will fix our minds on Christ than it is to modify our many habits by a gradual process. Indeed, the pity of life is that people spin out their earthly careers laboring to change little things rather than coming to grips with the ruling desires and passions of their souls.

I do not wish to minimize the place of gradual maturing which we think of as growth in grace and wisdom. But I wish to insist that that can never take the place of the transforming grace of God whereby we become subject to the sway of Christ.

Life Involves Decisions

Many of us might say that we grew up in Christian homes and therefore do not need to be converted. But surely life is more than habits and routines. There is a living mind that makes decisions along life's way. And some of those decisions shape our whole being, including our habits. We come to see for ourselves the greatness of democracy and yield ourselves to it. We fall in love and commit ourselves to a man or a maid partly by the force of an inner decision. So is it in regard to Christ.

I too grew up in a Christian home. And there is nothing on this earth that can take the place of the enduring influence of daily, living, Christian examples upon developing minds. But I am convinced that everyone needs to reach the point when he knows the inadequacy of his own goodness and the adequacy of the grace of God.

Most of us ought not to be the way we are. We ought not to be content with mediocrity and sin. We yield to the same old temptations, fall into the same foolish mistakes, trip over the same obvious obstacles. Our neighbors know it, our children see it, our husbands or wives are burdened by it.

Oh, the pity of a life that is condemned to repeat its sins and defeats! Must we fail? Must we remain on that commonplace level? Must we be forever under the tyranny of a bad temper, a poisonous resentment, a fatal pride, a cancerous habit of complaining? Is there no answer to our lust and greed and gluttony? Is prejudice against another whether on account of race or creed or any other difference to keep us from a living fellowship with God to the end of our days? If so, God pity us all. But these things need not, nay, must not be.

Bible Calls Men to Conversion

If there is one thing on which the Bible is clear it is this: *Anyone can begin a new life with the help of God.* And the best time to begin that new life is now. This runs like a theme through the Bible. From the vision of Jacob at Bethel to the transforming experience of Moses in Arabia, from the repentance and faith of David the king, to the conversion of Isaiah the prophet, from Zacchaeus and Matthew the tax collectors, to Saul of Tarsus the Pharisee—in short, from beginning to end, the Bible is a book about conversion. "Turn," "return," "forsake," "choose," "repent," "come"—these and many others like them—are among the most striking words of the Bible. And they bear an appeal to radical changes in living.

In all of this the Bible reveals the most profound insight. For nothing is easier than to become slaves of routine and so to miss the wonderful possibilities yet waiting to be realized with the help of God. The Bible will not allow us to do that. It would shake us out of our indifference, stir us, pierce beneath our superficial habits, and call us to a life truly under God.

It is not easy for us to see the urgency of all this. For we live in a mechanical age. Everything tends to be reduced to routine. The sudden and spontaneous seem to the modern

nd too superficial to effect enduring changes. We become conditioned to our habits and to the ordinary rounds of e that we expect nothing of importance to occur that does t work upon us gradually, slowly, steadily.

And yet in life itself how often we are reminded that e high and holy moment touches us and leaves us ever terwards different creatures! A thousand other lessons nnot take the place of that moment. To it our souls return if God were speaking therein in some special way. That e moment (or certain other ones like it) stands as a landark in the history of the soul which signifies a new birth der God.

"Habit Is Society's Fly-Wheel"

We are creatures of habit. From one point of view this et bespeaks the wisdom of God in making us. For habit one of our finest possessions. It saves us the energy of arning over again what we already know how to do. This what William James meant when he spoke of habit as the y-wheel of society. It keeps the wheels turning with a inimum of effort. But, from another standpoint, habit is e source of our bondage and failure to be at our best. e become pleased with ourselves as we are and lose the sion of ourselves as we ought to be.

The Bible calls us to a new life in Christ. It bids us pent, recognize ourselves for what we are, and look to God r the power to climb to higher heights of living. Yes, we e creatures of habit and routine. But with the help of God we can break old habits and build new and better ones. The Bible will never let us forget this. And in this it has the support of a group of witnesses so impressive in their cumulative testimony that one stands amazed before those multitudes who, in the name of good sense, leave no room in their thought for conversion.

Take conversion out of Christian history and the Church would be immeasurably poorer. In fact, we might well doubt whether we should have a living Church at all. But how can we see this? If we are not convinced by the witness of thousands upon thousands of civilized human beings from all parts of the earth, what will convince us? There are no other facts to present than the facts from the lives of those who have been remade by the grace of God.

Conversion involves a radical revolution within our souls, or a definite fixing of the principle and policy of our lives. The grace of God works according to the specific needs of each one of us. So, we must not put it into molds and say how it will manifest itself in particular individuals. But Christian conversion always involves the commitment of life to God in Christ and faith in His unfailing goodness. Every one of us needs that. If we have never come to know Him and to trust Him, we need that healing power that forgives us of our sins and that grace which sustains us in goodness. And when we lag behind and follow the Master from afar, we need to return and be quickened by our Lord. "Except one be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3).

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Significant Conference on Evangelism

By J. W. Golden

The Central Jurisdictional Conference on Evangelism, held August 15-17 in Mount Zion Methodist Church, Cincinnati, Ohio, was the first of six of its kind. It was a conference of information and inspiration on the Action Program of Evangelism as it relates to the Advance for Christ and His Church.

Those in attendance manifested unusual interest from the beginning to the end. Their testimonies showed optimism and great concern for a real Evangelistic advance in winning people to Christ, and in training them for Christian Service and Victorious living.

All of the Bishops of the Jurisdiction (except Bishop W. J. King, who is in Africa) were present and made outstanding contributions.

Our host Bishop, W. E. Kelly, gave the keynote address on "Our Church Faces the World and Its Task," He made clear the demands of the present age, and that it is imperative for the Church to evangelize.

Bishop A. P. Shaw spoke on "Do the Work of an Evangelist." We were made conscious of our responsibilities and opportunities in the midst of the world's chaotic conditions.

Bishop R. N. Brook presided at one session and gave some extremely helpful information to Christian workers.

Bishop J. W. E. Bowen spoke profoundly on "The Church the Body of Christ." And we saw our unity, our relationships to all Christian believers, irrespective of nationality, race, class, or color; regardless of economic, social, or intellectual levels. This gave us a greater appreciation of all members of the Church, the Body of Christ.

Bishop R. E. Jones (retired) discussed "The Church at Prayer" and led us into the Upper Room of a real pentecostal atmosphere. All the conference secretaries of evangelism participated.

Drs. J. A. Green and M. S. Davage of the General Board of Education discussed the relations of Evangelism and Christian Education.

C. T. R. Nelson, Executive Secretary, Lexington Conference, spoke convincingly on "Assimilating New Members" and served as publicity representative.

Dr. D. P. Young, pastor, Scott Methodist Church, Detroit, lifted our horizon as he spoke on "Our Church's Concern for the Future."

Dr. J. H. Peters, pastor, Ebenezer Methodist Church, Washington, D. C., greatly evaluated "Teaching and Preaching for a Verdict."

Dr. O. B. Quick, pastor of Cory Methodist Church, Cleveland, Ohio, made clear the importance of the "Pastors' Training Class."

Dr. E. A. Love, director of the Department of Negro Work, Board of Missions, New York, and Dr. D. M. Jordan, pastor, R. E. Jones Temple, Louisville, Kentucky, addressed us on "Our Evangelistic Opportunity in New Fields," with presentations of the results of a city survey by Dr. Jordan. Both made clear the Macedonian call from many places throughout the country.

Mrs. G. W. Carter, Jurisdictional President of the Woman's Society of Christian Service, spoke on "Our Responsibility in Developing Christian Families." Mrs. Eva B. Parks, Spiritual Life Secretary of the Society, spoke on "Cultivating the Spiritual Life." Both of these women urged lifting up Christ in the home, in corporate worship, and in daily living. Each pledged full cooperation with our Jurisdictional Conference Board of Evangelism in promoting the work in districts and local churches.

Our Action Program was presented by the writer. Dr. Harry Denman, the Executive Secretary of the General Board of Evangelism, in his usual dynamic way spoke on "The Church Aflame" and "The Inner Call to Service." Our hearts were again strangely warmed.

Ministers and laymen testified that they were anxious to give themselves in reconsecration for service and were ready and willing to answer the call, each saying, as did the Prophet Isaiah, "Here am I, send me."

If You Want Your Church to Have a Reaching Revival

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You Want to Deepen the Spiritual Experience of Your People

You Want to Recruit Active Workers for the Kingdom

You Want to Engage Spiritedly in the Advance for Christ and His Church

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A booklet by Homer J. R. Elford
(For the New Member)
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How to Be a Fellowship Friend
A leaflet by G. Ernest Thomas
5¢ each; 10 or more, 2¢ each

Be a Member Where You Are
A leaflet by Dawson C. Bryan
$2.00 per 100

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$3.00 per 100; $2.50 per 100 for orders of 200 or more

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A leaflet by C. Stanley Lowell
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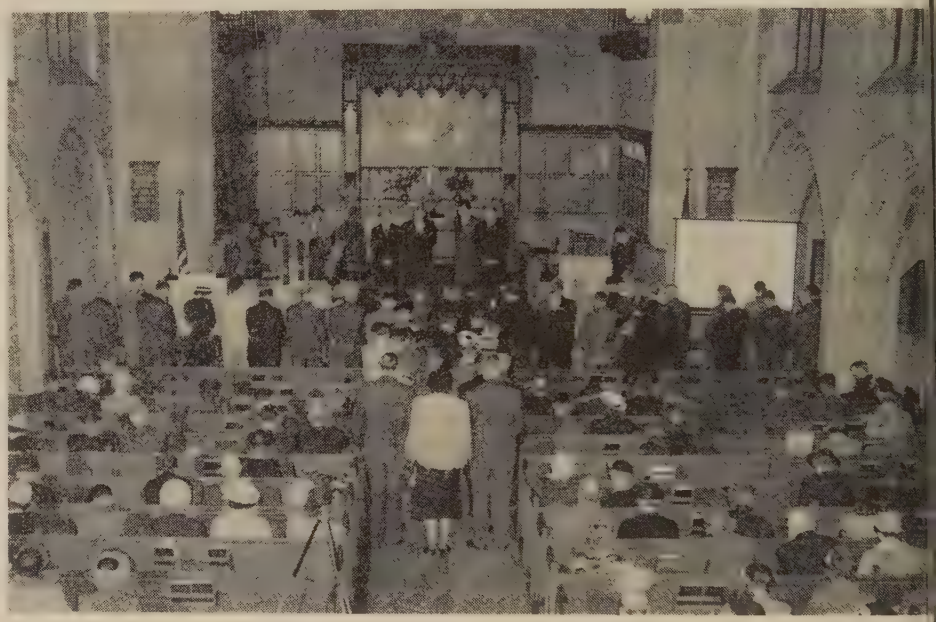
Evangelism in the Newark Conference

A Brief Report By

Harold A. Gamblin
District Secretary of Evangelism
Newark (N. J.) District

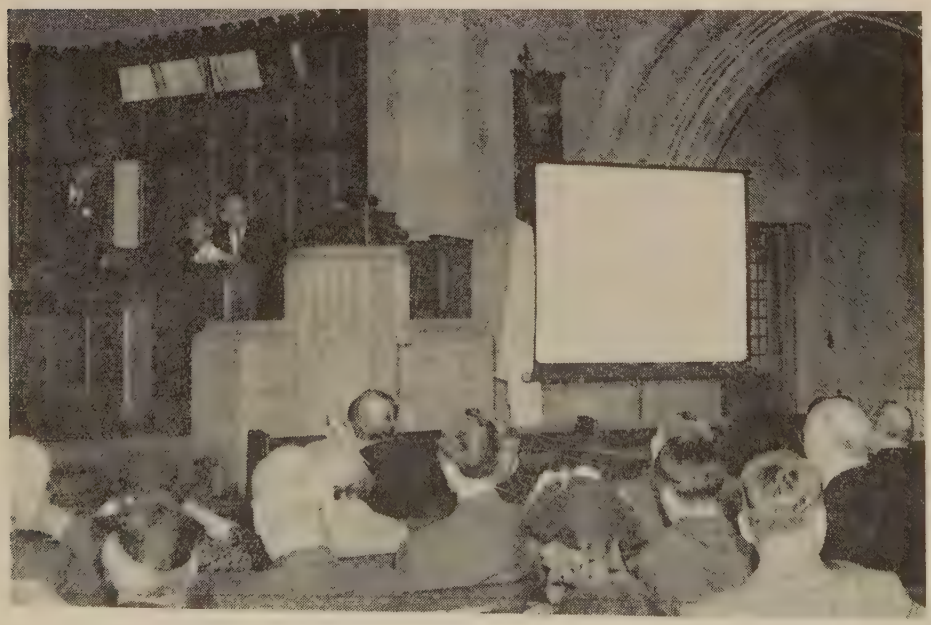
Below, lay evangelistic visitors bow in prayer of consecration at the Newark Annual Conference Program of Evangelism, Bloomfield, New Jersey. Within the chancel are (left to right) Herbert Kip, member of the Conference Commission on Evangelism; Thomas Walker, Conference Secretary of Evangelism; Thor Torgerson, Chairman of the Conference Commission on Evangelism; George Teague, District Secretary of Evangelism, Jersey City District; Harold Gamblin, District Secretary of Evangelism, Newark District; and G. Ernest Thomas, speaker of the evening.



The evangelistic program of the Newark (New Jersey) Conference proved the finest in recent years, reflecting a genuine enthusiasm among both laymen and ministers.

In the Newark District almost half the participating churches were in rural areas.

In both the Paterson and Jersey City Districts, the program of Visitation Evangelism was carried out in larger centers, suburban and city churches. One notable exception was the church at Stony Point, N. Y. (Jersey City District). Here a congregation of less than 50 active members won 52 commitments in a community, ultra conservative, where for years there had been no "opportunity" for evangelism.



In the picture at the left, George Teague (extreme left), Jersey City District Secretary of Evangelism, concludes his report as Harold Gamblin prepares to present the Conference Summary at the Newark Annual Conference, Bloomfield, New Jersey. Forrest M. Fuess, Chairman of the Conference Advance Committee, is seated between Brothers Teague and Gamblin.

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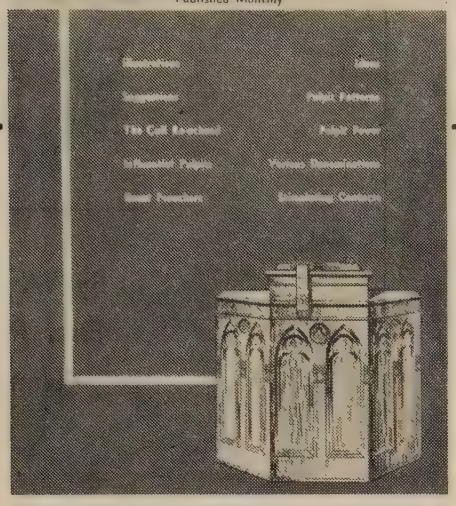
Published Monthly



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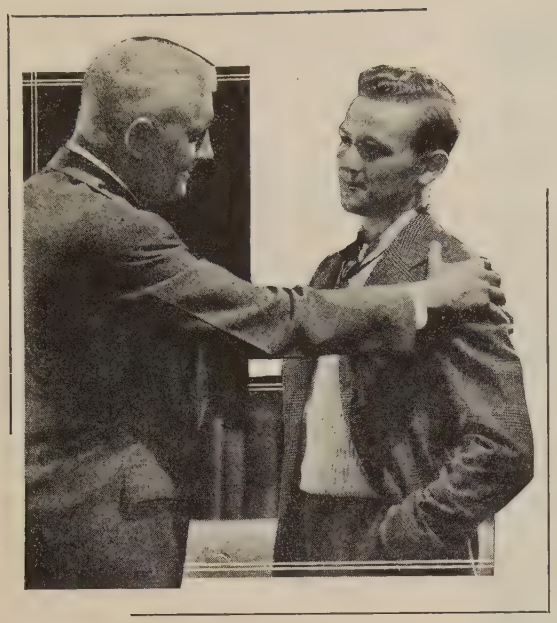

EVERY DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT AN EVANGELIST

By W. R. Willis, Pastor
First Methodist Church
Henderson, Texas

SOMEONE has defined the office of district superintendent as "the applied end of the episcopacy." The connotations of such a definition could lead one to a feeling of exasperation, or to the other extreme of exaltation. Yet in either case we know the office to be one of importance in the administrative work of the church, and in the promotion of the program of her services.

There are few bishops, if any, who have the privilege of such close contact with pastors and churches as our district superintendents have. The attitudes of the people toward their district superintendent largely reflect the attitude of the pastor. This is generally true as to the attitude toward our bishops. Yet each individual superintendent has his privilege and measure of responsibility in this relation. He is one of the ministers, and his personal life and attitude, as well as his office and work, make a distinct contribution to the building of the Kingdom.

This is a great day for the Christian Church. ADVANCE! Advance is the cry. Advance is our prayer. Advance in the name of Jesus Christ. Numbers, reports, finances, and figures will have their respective places of importance, for these will be the manifestations of the real advance in spirit and in faith. What a privilege for the superintendent, both in his personal relations and his quarterly conferences, to reveal the deeper objectives of the Advance.

Need for Additional Strength

In appraising the work of his pastors and local churches, the superintendent so many times realizes the need of additional strength for that local situation. This is true when he thinks in terms of the general church or of the ecumenical church. When he considers its financial strength, or numerical strength, or leadership, or greater realization of the needs of educational work, or missionary work and support, he finds the spirit and work of evangelism to be the answer. His realization of the needs adds to his privileges and responsibilities.

The Christian religion is person centered. The ministry of Jesus centers around persons. What greater opportunity for a superintendent to be an evangelist than to encourage the spirit of evangelism in the hearts of his pastors? He multiplies his ministry as he invests in other ministers. A closer fellowship is developed when a pastor and his superintendent feel a mutual burden and passion for the souls of men and women, boys and girls. Both, and each, feel as a part of a team that is seeking to win the world for Christ. No one can do it all; yet the loneliness and weariness of a single heart are all but overwhelming when he feels as though he is carrying the burden alone. Strength as well as knowledge is imparted in this closer fellowship between pastor and superintendent.

How easy it is for a pastor to become "bogged down" in his local work. He does *not* forsake his high calling, yet his members bestow upon him the responsibilities of financier, administrator, teacher, preacher, pastor, janitor's aid, general promoter, etc. His heart yearns to feel and know that he is having a greater part in building the Kingdom than these jobs indicate. Here the superintendent is the evangel to help the pastor to see that things are means to the end. Proportional time can be spent in all phases of the work, and in all things we can be witnesses for our Lord, by word, deed and attitude. Evangelism is not methods; it is spirit.

An Evangelist of the Lord

Again the superintendent is an evangelist of the Lord as he counsels with the pastor concerning methods of evangelism. The church schools today are doing a magnificent job and the pastor who sees his opportunity to work with officers, teachers, and pupils realizes the unlimited field, both in education and evangelism. What greater approach and contact can be made with the youth of our land than through the varied activities of our church school? Mass evangelism is a method we are too much inclined to abandon. Men are moved in mass by others. Can we not recapture the zeal and fire whereby the Church can make an appeal to the masses for our Lord? Because emotionalism was overly stressed in other days, do we have to play on the same note? These are questions the superintendent and pastor can discuss in the light of the needs of a community and the leadership available. Every superintendent in Methodism is an evangelist in the name of our Lord Jesus who leads his pastors in spiritual retreats and schools of technique. Maybe it is true that not all superintendents will be qualified to

h the techniques of visitation evan-sm, yet the calling together of the tors and the establishment of the bol will be the superintendent's priv-e. He will be an instrument in the ds of the Lord to be used as he s his pastors to the vanguard of the vance.

The district superintendent is not essarily a victim of mechanics, ask- only a few questions that are re-red on the conference sheets. He can e a very definite part in shaping the d and attitude of people toward the tor, the church, and toward Christ mself. By his spirit and attitude in quarterly conference the superin-dent can give full proof of his minis-. Too often it has been said that the S. is interested only in the financial orts of the pastor. It is true that s is part of his responsibility, good bad. His oversight of the general gram of the Church requires such erest. But his interest need not be marily in this field. More stress and portance can be given to the report of local committee on membership and ngelism. Here the work that has been e can be reported, and the proposed rk for the future discussed. Real en-ragement can be given here to the tor and the committee, if the quar-ly conference spends some prayerful ught and consideration on "what are planning and doing for the winning others to the Kingdom of Love?" The tor is anxious to do all he can, but his big job is to get others to help him. If the superintendent speaks encouraging-ly of the work that has been done, and challenges all the officers of the church to pray, to give, and to labor according to the commission of Christ, he will mightily undergird the evangelical achievement of the local church. This does not mean that the superintendent is to do the work of the local pastor. But it does mean that he should reiterate and re-emphasize the task given to our keeping. The laymen need to hear again and again brief interpretations of evangelism. Too many have the conception that it means only the conducting of missions, or public services. The urgency of evangelism is a note which cannot be sounded too often. The pastor's emphasis at this point needs the constant support of the superintendent's authority. Laymen recognize the laws of learning and habits in other fields, but they are inclined to think little upon their application to the moral and spiritual laws of life. Undoubtedly the pastor has stressed those laws. But his message and appeal become all the stronger when corroborated by the superintendent.

Sound an Encouraging Word

In the quarterly conference reports from the W.S.C.S., M.Y.F., the Church School, the Methodist Men, and other organizations, the superintendent can easily accept the remarks "we are getting along about as well as could be expected" and a statement of the finances. Yet how much more can be accomplished and spiritual life attained if an encouraging word of expectation be sounded as to their work in winning others and what part they are having in making the Church a living Christian brotherhood. Is it not true that many of our converts and babes in Christ died of a chill they received while trying to find their place in our churches? Is the pastor responsible for that too? The warm hearts of the pastor and superintendent, both appealing for a spiritual atmosphere in our churches, will find a response in the hearts of our Christian laymen who will make of our Church a brotherhood.

A rural story sums up a temptation that comes to us all too often. A farmer walking down the road with his dog stopped to converse with a man he met. The stranger asked the farmer, "Is that your coon hound? "Yep," replied the farmer. "Is he a good hunting dog?" The farmer answered, "Guess he's pretty good, but he ain't caught nothing yet. But nothing's caught him either." Have I caught the vision of my opportunities? Have visions and opportunities failed to catch my heart and mind?

ADVANCE! EVANGELIZE! "Be my witnesses." Thank God for being a member of a Church that challenges my best and affords unlimited opportunities of service to my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

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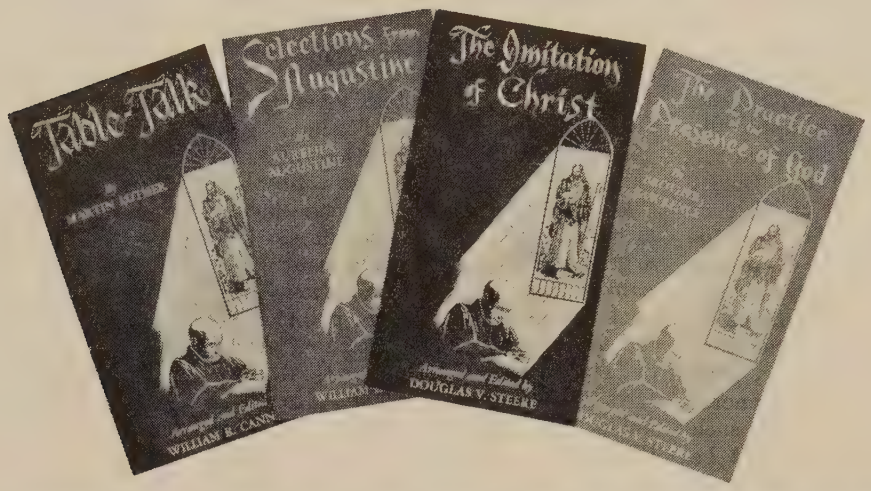

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FRANK C. LAUBACH

Single copies, 10 cents; 12 copies, $1.00; 100 or more, 6 cents each; set of six, 50 cents.

1908 Grand Ave. The Upper Room Nashville 4, Tennesse

The Authority of the Bible

By Aubrey G. Walton

IT is only natural, I suppose, in such an hour of uncertainty and confusion as the present, that men should seek security and listen for the voice that speaks with authority. This is exactly what countless numbers of men are doing today. This is as true in the moral and spiritual realm as it is in the economic, social, and political world. And among the several avenues by which men seek religious certainty there is that way that leads to the Bible.

The Bible is our Book of Faith. It has been called "The source book of Christian religion, Christian theology, and Christian life." It is old but ever new. Parts of the Old Testament were written hundreds of years before the birth of Christ. Yet the Bible is today the "best-seller." Our Christian faith depends, in large measure, upon the Bible.

What, then, is the authority of the Bible? It is the authority of God—the authority of God as he has revealed himself and his purposes to men. The Bible is a book about God. It is the story of man's discovery of and his fellowship with God. We often refer to the Bible as the word of God. It is for us the message of God to men.

This is what we have in mind when we speak of the Bible as the record of God's revelation of himself to men. To be sure, the Bible was written by men, but it was written by men who knew God, and who were trying to record their experiences of God and to interpret them for others.

The Bible, then, is the great record of God's revelation of himself to men. We may use other sources, but they all come second and depend themselves upon the record of man's experience of God contained in Holy Scripture. Men cannot do without the Bible. The great theme of the Bible is Divine Revelation. It encompasses, to be sure, the whole literature of a people. It includes volumes of history, documents of law, verses of poetry, stanzas of song, pages of drama, chapters of biography, paragraphs of prophecy, and books of wisdom. But from the beginning to the end the great theme of the Bible is God. The very first verse of the first chapter of the first book reads "In the beginning God."

The Bible came to be in this manner: A certain people, called the Hebrews, wrote the books of the Bible, with the exception of the Third Gospel and the Book of Acts, which were written by Luke, a Gentile. These people were peculiar, in the sense that they, above all other peoples, came to a knowledge of God as the one and only true God, "a God perfectly righteous and delighting in righteousness." This was definitely, for them, a progressive revelation. Nothing like this happened to any other of the ancient tribes or nations. Here and there an individual would catch a vision and move out upon that higher road, but his fellows would lose the way. Not so with the Jews. In generation after generation men unusually sensitive in a spiritual manner took up the search for God and led their people higher and higher on their holy journey. And when they learned to write they began to record their experiences. They went back into the oral tradition of their race and transcribed the stories of the creation which had been handed down from generation to generation. Then they wrote the history of their people. They put down their songs and poems. They recorded their experiences of God, and set to writing the best of everything they knew. Through usage and continued reading and re-reading across the centuries, certain of these records lived, and became for the Hebrew people their religious literature. They divided these books into what they called the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings, and so what we know as the Old Testament came into existence.

These were the sacred writings available to Jesus when he walked among men in Galilee. They were the Scriptures to which he referred. They made up a Bible for him. He did not speak of these writings as the Bible. He did not refer to them as the Old Testament. He called them the Scriptures, and in them he found a record of the experiences of God in the history of the Hebrew people. God had spoken to men in their inner lives and they had been impelled to tell others what God had said to them. They had met God and they had written down, as best they could, what God had meant to them in these supreme and sacred experiences through which they had passed. We cannot dispense with the Old Testament. Its value remains and will remain, for it is a record of man's experience of God before the advent of Christ.

For you see, after Jesus Christ the New Testament was written, and it was written largely about him and one other, the Holy Spirit. But this part of the Bible, just as the other part, is about God. For Christ is the supreme revelation of God, and the Holy Spirit continues to reveal God to men to this very moment.

Men who knew Christ wrote about him. And men who, as a result of their experiences of Christ, were filled with the Holy Spirit wrote about the workings of the Spirit. And certain of their writings were gathered together by the early church and put with the books that made up the Jewish Scriptures, and we have our Bible.

To be sure, it is not just as simple as that—but that is the framework of the picture—and if we understand this much we will know how to go on and comprehend much more about the origin and growth of the Bible from more scholarly and technical standpoints.

The Bible is the record of the activities of God as he carries on his purposes in the affairs and experiences of men. As we have pointed out, this record includes the whole literature of a people through which their experiences are revealed. For the books that make up the Bible were written out of the real life of the people. As Dr. Charles Reynold Brown says, "As we read the Bible we actually come upon the people while they are seeking, praying, weeping, confessing their sins, discussing their problems, acting and then noting the moral result."

The authority of the Bible, then, is the same kind of authority that we recognize today as truly valid and entirely dependable—the authority of observation, experimentation, and evaluation. Dr. Harold A. Bosley writes, "We ap-

peal to experience in religion for precisely the same reasons that make it indispensable in home, law, and education."

Thus the authority of the Bible is the authority of experience. One of the best definitions of the Bible that I know is this one: "The Bible is the record of the progressive revelation which God has made of himself through the religious experiences of a chosen people." Over against the theories of religious authority residing in some purely external source, or in some speculative dogmatism or rationalism beyond the realm of human experience, the Bible stands as the record and the interpretation of the personal experience of God on the part of the individual man.

Thus the method of authority discovered in the Bible is the only truly empirical method based upon the scientific approaches of observation and experimentation. The authority of the Bible does not rest upon the theories of infallibility and verbal inspiration. It rests on the inner experiences of God on the part of men who, under the influence and inspiration of these experiences, sought to record them and to interpret them for other men.

The Bible, then, speaks with authority to every man upon the subject of finding and knowing God. Any man who will approach the Bible with an open, unprejudiced, and teachable mind, motivated by an earnest and sincere spirit, will find there sufficient light to enable him to place himself in the right attitude in which he may hold communion with God and receive from him the direction, the inspiration, and the power by which he may shape his life and conduct in conformity with the intent and purpose of the high and holy God.

It is the testimony of those who wrote the Bible, reinforced by the witness of Christian men in all succeeding generations, that the experiences of God on the part of man recorded in the Bible are real and can be tested in the laboratory of human experiences now and at any time. For in the words of Jesus we may "seek the truth and the truth will make us free."

For the Bible leads men into religious experiences of their own. As Sabatier has so well said in his book, *Religions of Authority*: "Faith thus understood is God consciously felt in the heart, the inward revelation of God and of his habitation in us . . . There is nothing in the gospel which your conscience may not recognize as that highest good to which it secretly aspires; nothing which, if you sincerely desire it, you cannot yourself experience, and thus recognize it as the very soul of your soul."

Traditional external authority is no longer necessary. For in the religion of the Spirit, as recorded and interpret in the Bible, man's spirit may co directly, through experience, into f lowship with the Spirit of the Livi God.

The supreme achievement of the Bi is to be seen when it leads a man int personal experience of Jesus Christ Lord and Saviour. For when this ha pens in the life of a man his religio faith is grounded not in a book, or institution, or in any other person, h in the experience of the mercy and t love of God revealed to us in Jes Christ, and recorded for us in the pag of the Bible. Thus through the Bib which tells us of God and his redeemi grace as he has made it effective in t lives of others and which assures us th God will grant to us forgiveness a salvation if we will believe and tru men are led into personal experienc of God through Christ.

This is the authority of the Bible. L us, then, read this book, and know f ourselves the authority which it has f us.

"We search the world for truth. We c
The good, the true the beautiful,
From graven stone and written scrol
And all old flower-fields of the soul;
And, weary seekers of the best,
We come back laden from our quest,
To find that all the sages said
Is in the Book our mothers read."

Suggestions for Daily Bible Reading

Mrs. J. M. Thompson

1. Commence with a book of the Bible, and continue to read in small installments in that book until you have completed it. Then select another book, and read it through to the finish. In this way you will not miss any of the searching messages of God's word.

2. Keep on reading until you come to a verse that you can feel is God's "Marching Order" for the day for you. Underline that verse, and let it search every area of your life. God's Spirit will bring its truth to bear upon your heart and mind. Carry that verse with you through the day. In many a trying hour it will steady and inspire you.

3. Mark the place where you have finished reading, and commence with the next verse the following day. It may be advisable for you to carry on the one verse for several days or even a full week until the full implication of its teaching has been brought to bear upon your life.

4. Always preface your reading by a brief prayer that God's Holy Spirit will bring the truth of His word to bear upon your heart. As you open the Bible to read from the place where you have left off the previous day, ask yourself this question: "What is God's message for me today?" Exclude from your mind every thought of the application of this message to other persons whom you know. This message is God's message to *you*. The power of consecration and the ability to apply God's message to your own life, and yours alone, will come slowly. It will increase with your growth in spiritual discipline.

5. When you have allowed Goo message of the morning to search yo heart, a prayer of thanksgiving f spiritual strength, or a prayer of co fession and penitence for your mistak and failures will well up within yo Make every day a day of new begi nings and of fresh consecration to t service of God. Having sought a found God's forgiveness for the wron of the past, turn your back resolutely these failures, and face the new li opening up before you.

6. Be sure to keep inviolate th period for the daily reading of t Bible. Before long it will begin to be fruit. Many of the truths with whi you begin the day will remain fixed your memory and they will be a sour of strength and guidance to you.

The Challenge of A NEW HALF-CENTURY

By Harry Denman

ECEMBER 31 is the last day and the last Sunday in the current r. It is also the last day and the t Sunday of the first 50 years of s century. With January first the t 50 years of the century will begin. December 31 can and should be a y of thanksgiving and dedication. We n thank our Heavenly Father for all material and spiritual blessings of last half century and dedicate ourves to the task of seeing that as inidual members of this nation we w richer in spiritual resources than material resources.

If we compare 1900 with 1950 we l see that we have accomplished re in the field of science than we e in the field of the spirit. In 1900 theology was better than our techogy. In 1950 the reverse is true.

Increasingly in the past 50 years we e given time to gadgets which would ieve us from drudgery only to rese ourselves from the discipline of spirit. Today we have the gadgets. e work only half the time that we d in 1900 but our leisure has been en to the dissipation of the flesh her than to the discipline of the rit. As we enter the last half of s century let us determine that our e will be given to the cultivation the mind and the soul. We are rich the material; let us become rich in spiritual. Let us determine to know d better than we know how to acnulate gold. Let us determine to ow Christ as our Redeemer and Savr and to know Him better than we ow the art of recreation. Let us dermine to make December 31 a day the Holy Spirit to empower us her than a day when we will be ssessed of unholy spirits. What can do to make Sunday, December 31, 50, a holy day?

1. All Christian families and iniduals can have a worship service their homes early Sunday morning. t all worship services have to be ld in the church sanctuary. We need re worship services in the sanctuary the home. We believe in the priestod of believers. Families or individuals can use their regular devotional book or they can use special devotions prepared for this purpose or they can sing a hymn, read from God's book, and pray.

Every family and individual should be praying for peace and spiritual power in order that this civilization will be worth saving.

2. Some churches will desire to have a Communion Breakfast for men and boys. College and university students will be home for the holidays. Many young people from the military camps will be home. Some will be leaving for military camps. Why not have a Communion Breakfast for men and boys? Let fathers and sons have the fellowship of kneeling at the altar of the church for the purpose of dedicating themselves to Christ and His Church.

3. Special emphasis should be given to this day in the Sunday school. The young people home from college and military camps should be recognized. Someone should tell about the Sunday school of 1900, which consisted mainly of a primary class and a boys' and girls' class. The youth and adult movements have been born in these last 50 years. Also, relate the progress which has been made in making the Sunday school an educational institution by the increase in curricula and training for teachers. Then the members of the Sunday school should dedicate themselves to making it a great evangelistic agency of the Church during the next 50 years by each one reaching one each week for Christ and the Church.

The Sunday morning worship service can be a time for thanksgiving and dedication. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper can be observed. Some churches will use this Sunday as a time for the members of the church to make a covenant with God to try to win at least one person for Christ and the Church between that day and Easter Sunday, March 25, 1951.

What would happen to this nation and to the Kingdom if 10,000,000 Protestants would go out from this service on December 31 determined to win some by being winsome for Christ!

Millions in America are waiting for some consecrated Christian to tell the good news that Christ is alive and will save to the uttermost if persons will repent and believe. The Sunday morning worship service should be a memorable day in all our churches.

Because it is the last day of the year and of the first half of the century, Sunday afternoon will be a good time to visit the unchurched. Many persons will be thinking of changing their way of life. The Holy Spirit is working on America. This will be a good time, psychologically, to secure commitments. If we can get 100,000 churches to make evangelistic visits we will win 1,000,000 persons for Christ and His Church on the last day of the year.

In what better way can church members spend the afternoon or evening than by making evangelistic visits? There are young couples in every community who would be glad for the ambassadors of Christ and the Church to visit them.

Early Sunday evening can be used for great evangelistic services in every church. Why should churches be closed while taverns and night clubs are open to celebrate the closing of the year? Every church in America should be open.

There can be a time for fellowship for young and old, either before or immediately following the evening evangelistic service. Sunday night should be a time when we proclaim the living Christ and His power to save this civilization from destruction. We need to preach that Christ and His Kingdom are more powerful than communism. Closed churches on Sunday night mean that communism and secularism have a better chance to capture this nation.

Late Sunday night, from 10:30 or 11:00 until midnight, there should be in every church a large group of members on their knees praying for our world and our churches. This can be

called a New Life Service. As we come to the new 50 years of this century we need to find new life in Christ in order that this nation will become a Christian nation. We need to be praying that we will have a world revival instead of a world war. Let us pray that youth will become soldiers of the cross and overcome atheistic communism. Let us pray that our wealth and incomes will be dedicated to Christ's cause rather than to military causes.

Let us make December 31 a holy day with many spiritual activities. The church can be kept open all day for prayer and communion with our living Christ. Spiritual visits can be made to jails, institutions, hospitals. Services can be held over the radio and on the streets.

Let us determine that American Protestantism shall take the gospel of Christ in absolute earnestness to every person in America. We believe that a great revival of Christianity can begin on December 31 and that it will sweep on for the next 50 years.

Let us believe
Let us witness
Let us pray
Let us work
Let us give
Let us praise

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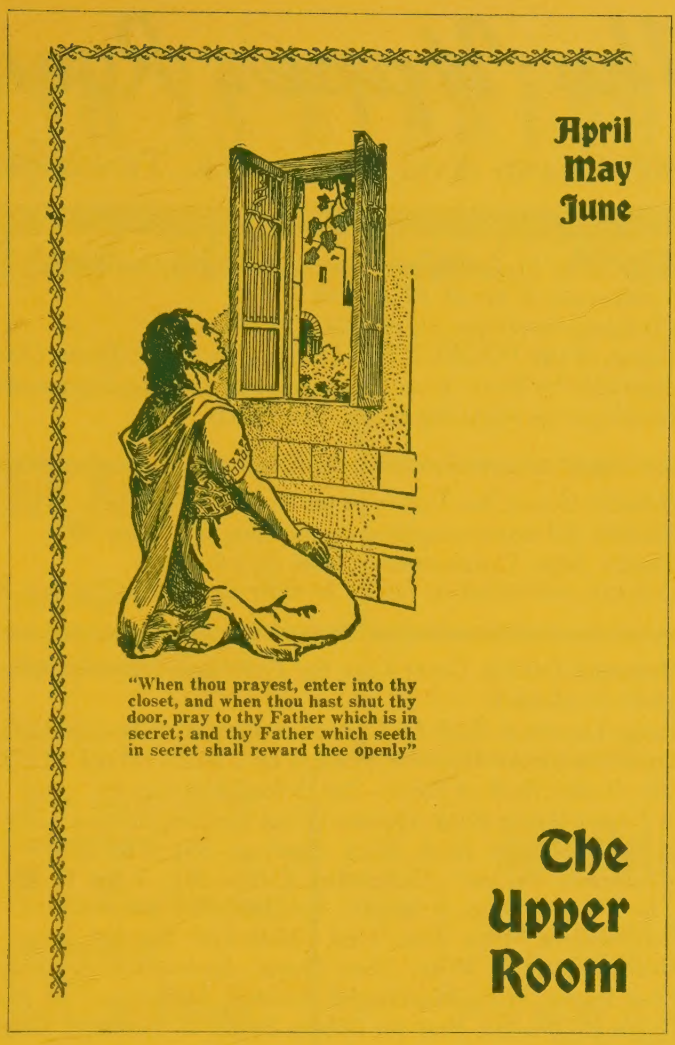
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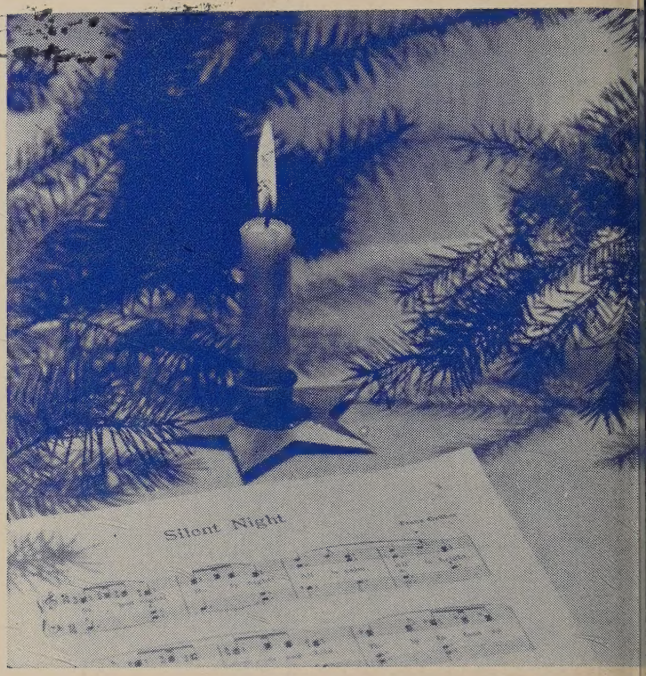
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